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HUMILITY THE TRUE TALISMAN

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BACK TO HOLY CHURCH

EXPERIENCES AND KNOWLEDGE ACQUIRED BY A CONVERT

With a Preface by the
Very Rev. Monsignor ROBERT HUGH BENSON

SIXTH IMPRESSION. With Portrait

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HUMILITY
THE TRUE TALISMAN

A STUDY OF CATHOLICISM

BY

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BEING A TRANSLATION OF DAS ZEICHEN DES ECHTEN RINGES BY
G. SCHOETENSACK

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PREFACE

THE worker in the sphere of modern history is everywhere and perpetually confronted by the contrasts between the various Christian Creeds right up to the present time. Any historian intent on acquiring a true estimate of persons, institutions and events is bound to consider these contrasts with rigorous attention until he understands their origin as well as their nature and justification.

One question above all others demands solution, or at least an attempt at solution, for until a correct answer to it is acquired all the changes of these last three centuries can be understood but imperfectly, and but inadequately judged. This fundamental question is: *which of the many religious parties always has been and still is in possession of the Truth?* Should we succeed in obtaining a trustworthy answer to this problem, light will be thrown on all other subjects with which history treats. For it is evident that the whole historical issue assumes a different aspect according to whether this or that religious community

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is found to be in possession of the true knowledge of salvation.

It may be objected that such truth does not exist, or if it does, that it can never be established with any degree of certainty. Even were such a statement correct the historian would not thereby be relieved of his duty of prosecuting an investigation of the problem above stated. He must run the risk of his labours being fruitless in the end. At the same time experience shows that even the greatest difficulties are surmountable, be they only grappled with correctly deep down at the roots.

In approaching this task, I am not beginning a study which is entirely new to me, for I arrived at its conclusions long ago with a conviction the firmness of which entailed momentous consequences in my life. My present aim is rather to set forth as compactly and as decisively as possible the ideas and arguments which prevailed with me, and to arrange and focus them in the manner best calculated to constitute a convincing proof to all searchers for the truth. The fact that I am sure that I have found the truth constrains me to use this precious acquisition for the benefit of my science. I can in this sense affirm that the investigations which I offer are important historical ones.

ALBERT VON RUVILLE.

HALLE A. S.,
June, 1910.

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INTRODUCTION

THE following parable from Lessing's "Nathan the Wise," is a familiar one. The three chief religions, Christianity, Judaism and Islam are compared to three rings which a father leaves to his sons, only one of which is a genuine talisman, the remainder being but carefully fashioned, indistinguishable imitations. The consequence is that the three heirs do not know who among them possesses the real treasure. The parable will hardly appeal to Christians in this form. Judaism and Islam cannot be put on the same level as our own faith. Many may choose to substitute the various Christian churches for the three religions, and say that it is impossible for any inquirer to discover with certainty which has true doctrine, so that each of us must be satisfied with that which he has inherited as a family heirloom.

It would be sad, indeed, if this were really so, if a man were forced to remain throughout his life uncertain whether he possessed the genuine treasure or no. The majority of men are content to be guided

by custom. Unused to discrimination, they do not for one moment suppose that another creed may be better than their own. At best they deem all forms of religion, like earthly possessions, to be of equal value, though they naturally manifest a preference for that which is their own. The notion that with truth such is not the case, that there can only be one Truth, never troubles the mind of the plain man, who reasons but superficially. Those among them alone change their religion who are prompted by desire of temporal benefit, or who, previously indifferent to matters of religion, have passed under some strong personal influence to a new camp. Their religious sentiment has been awakened for the first time, and they believe in the truth of their newly adopted religion either because they never seriously grasped that in which they were born, or because they came to neglect it, as time went on. In such cases as these, there can be no question of independent judgment.

There are, however, many Christians who, possessed of a clear reasoning faculty and stirred by strong religious yearnings, strive for truth independently, and do not accommodate themselves to the boundaries which chance to hem them in, but are resolved to form their religious convictions for themselves. We should expect to find such people in possession of the means of recognizing the true talisman. Moreover, we should expect them to possess those means *without*

the necessity of amassing theological knowledge. And not only these independent thinkers, but the masses of the people should also have some prospect of discovering the true faith. Their leaders should strive to come to a final decision concerning opposing doctrines that this might be attained. It would not be in accordance with the wisdom and loving kindness of the Most High to have hedged the Truth round with such obstacles that even the finest intellect could scarcely reach it with certainty. I do not mean to suggest that salvation cannot be found in a false creed, provided only that adherence to it is not culpable. Nevertheless a man in such a position is pursuing a wrong path which can only cause him much trouble in this world, and involve him in grave risks in regard to the world to come by depriving him during his earthly pilgrimage of the most precious blessings. People wrongly imagine that religious error is not an evil. It is a very great evil indeed. To live the whole of one's life on earth without true comfort, devoid of positive hope, full of doubts and uncertainties, is truly a great misfortune. We should consider it cruel on God's part had He cut off all means of avoiding so great an evil as this. Of what value would redemption be? No, we can rest assured that mankind possesses the means of distinguishing true doctrine from that which is false. *The genuine Ring is sure to bear some visible distinguishing mark.*

Is such a mark actually to be found? Does that quality exist which, while being foreign to certain religious denominations, is absolutely necessary to that form of Christianity which is true, and which, in its very possession stamps that which bears it with the hallmark of truth? The threefold star of Faith, Love and Hope, may first suggest itself to us, but it is easy to perceive that such is no distinguishing mark. Though the nature of Faith is differently explained in various Christian communities, and though their demands for the possession of that Faith may vary in extent, yet none will be found willing to confess that they are devoid of the sublime gift of Faith. With regard to Love, all the Churches teach that it is a most glorious treasure, the deepest stone in the foundations of Christianity. None will admit that others possess a greater measure of Love than themselves. And when we consider Hope of a hereafter, of a blessed eternal life, we remember that all Churches as such hold fast to it, though many individual so-called Christians try to do without it.

These gifts, then, cannot constitute the marks by which we are to recognize the One True Church. Any attempt to use them as such would only give rise to discussion as to who possessed them to the greatest extent. Let us look at another Christian Jewel which has endowed Christianity from the beginning with a degree of sublimity such as no other religious organ-

ization on earth has ever attained. We speak of *Humility.*

There can be no questioning the fact that this virtue has been among the inalienable possessions of the Christian Religion from the very beginning. The Holy Scriptures from first to last, the whole of Church History right up to the present day, testify to this fact. It was pride which cast out Satan and his angels into the pit. It was presumption which the enemy strove to instil into our first parents, and so bring about their ruin. "You will be as God," were his tempting words, and those words re-echo to-day from the enemies of Christ. On the other hand, the history of salvation is one of a spirit of humble obedience, visible through the ages of the Old Testament right up to that great moment when the Blessed Virgin made answer to the Angel of the Annunciation: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done unto me according to thy word". The Son of God, meek and humble of heart, brought salvation to the human race. The disciples of the Lord vanquished the proud rule of the Emperors and the refined Heathenism of the Græco-Roman culture, and the weapon which they used was Humility. This virtue has been deemed essential by true Christians of every century, whether they sat on a throne, bore the crozier, or earned their daily bread in the sweat of their brow.

But what do we understand by Humility? The

question seems almost an idle one, yet the right answer is not at once evident. At first we think of behaviour, humble words and manners, simplicity of dress, various acts of obedience, and so on. But these are only the fruit and not the tree itself. Humility is a state of mind, a condition of the soul on which a certain mode of behaviour is formed. We must find out what this state of mind is, and that first of all by comparing it with other states. Humility is not *submissiveness* such as is shown by the weak to the strong and powerful, and has always been common in Heathenism. Yet it would be wrong to say that the virtue of Humility is completely foreign to heathens. The idea of God has always been preserved among the nations from the earliest times though in a lesser or greater degree of purity, and the purer their idea, the more they were disposed to appear before the Ruler of the world in a spirit of Humility. Generally speaking, however, they approached their gods only with submissiveness, and fearful though covetous obedience. They wished to prevent the higher powers harming them, and to obtain certain temporal advantages. The same attitude was shown by inferiors to those of superior strength and power. This was certainly not the spirit of Humility.

Modesty too is something different. It is praised as a virtue, but is it always so? How often does modesty spring from diffidence and idleness, how

often from the desire to win the favour of others, or to gain a simple yet surer livelihood. Modesty is praiseworthy only when it accompanies Humility, in which case it is united to energetic activity.

Real Humility is cheerful willingness to submit to or serve another without any consideration of the one towards whom it is exercised. It consists in a readiness to put one's own will under the direction of another more able than oneself, no matter what be the outward relationship. This state of mind is least clearly perceptible when it is a question of yielding to those whose higher power or intelligence or superior legal or social status is obvious. In such a case submission is likely to arise from selfish motives. Humility becomes most conspicuous when it renders devotion and obedience to equals or inferiors, in some important cause. Though unholy promptings may possibly lurk in the rear in such cases as these, nevertheless their presence is much less probable. Should such exist, there is generally some higher power present behind the more lowly one towards which Humility has been shown. "Making oneself popular," for instance, is only submissiveness to the paramount populace by way of condescension to certain simple individuals.

What a mistake it is to liken Humility to weakness, and regard propagation of it degrading to humanity; a view rather popular nowadays. True Humility,

most purely manifested in Christianity, is just that force which enables a man to develop all his powers to the utmost by preventing his overstepping his natural limitations, and by attaching him to that field of activity to which he belongs by his whole nature. Here alone can he obtain power from God to strengthen him against temptation and the attacks of unbelief. Humility gives a mighty impulse to worldly activity; it urges to the perfect performance of every duty, to the fullest accomplishment of one's natural talents, and to the most zealous service both of one's neighbour, and of the community. The mightiest war-lord can perform his tasks with Humility, and they will be all the better for it. The keenest scholar and savant can pursue his researches with Humility, and the truths which he brings to light will be of much greater import. In every honest calling, there is scope for the improvement consequent on Humility of mind towards God and man, although of course in certain cases temporary gain may decrease.

Humility is a state of mind; a condition of the soul. It cannot be discerned immediately but only in its *manifestations*. These, as a rule, are of great diversity, but may be included under the headings of words, symbolical expressions, and acts. By symbolical expressions are meant all those external manifestations such as modes of speech, habiliment, bodily deportment, and the rest which have become the

international conventional signs of Humility. All such expressions may mislead the interpreter, for they may spring from quite another state of mind, and even be intentionally deceitful. Much knowledge of mankind in general and a prolonged acquaintance with individuals is necessary to estimate signs of Humility at their true value. Hypocrisy is sure to play a prominent part wherever worldly considerations are involved.

On the other hand, it is by no means necessary that Humility should always express itself in external manifestations, especially not in the conventional forms of daily life. Although hidden, the virtue may be present in a very high degree. Indeed people who are truly humble are often very reluctant to disclose the fact. Duty and higher motives should alone decide in what manner and to what extent Humility should be outwardly expressed; for it is likewise hypocrisy unduly to conceal this virtue, an action which often has its rise in cowardice.

Quite distinct from the external manifestations of Humility is *the exercise of the virtue*, although both may be expressed reciprocally. The difference lies in the fact that external manifestations or expressions are the result of the *existing* state of the mind, whilst the exercises spring from the desire for Humility, and are designed to awaken and strengthen it. The bond which connects Humility with its exercise is mani-

fested in a reciprocal action both forward and retrogressive. Man wishes to learn Humility, and so he performs actions and speaks words which make him appear humble and abase him outwardly. He thereby feels and then becomes conscious of Humility and of submission either to his fellow-creatures or to God. His pride is broken, and since he has acted in good will from the beginning, the result is not only submissiveness, or modesty, but true Humility.

We have now determined as far as possible the true significance of this divine virtue. We know that the true Church of Christ must possess it. It remains to be seen, however, whether it is the exclusive possession of only one among the Churches. If it is, then it must be regarded as the desired sign of the Genuine Ring. To arrive at a conclusion, we must consider in detail in what manner Humility has worked and is still working in religion, and especially in the Christian Religion; we must find out what part it has played throughout the great events of the history of salvation in ancient and modern times. We must perceive its influence in the various denominational organisations. We shall thus be enabled to learn in what place the magic flower blooms in its fullest glory. That place will be the One Genuine Religion—the Truth.

PART I.

HUMILITY IN THE HISTORY OF SALVATION.

CHAPTER I.

THE EXTINCTION OF HUMILITY.

THE experienced clear-sighted man of Science knows better than anyone else that Science,—purely secular Science,—in spite of the great progress which it has made, is yet very imperfect and fragmentary. Only the half-educated, the beginners, and those who are blinded by their own brilliance, believe in its overpowering strength and unconditional authority. Beyond a doubt secular Science can and does discover certain positive truths, but alongside of these a thousand problems start up again and again to which an answer of absolute certainty can never be given. Really useful results in some branches of Science may be compared to diamonds glittering in mountains of sand. They appear as the only incontestable facts amid a mass of disputable assertions whose fate is speedily to be replaced by others declared to be more sure than themselves.

It is therefore necessary to distinguish the *ordinary results of scientific research* from *finally acknowledged and firmly established scientific facts.* The former are preliminary, though perhaps well-founded, suppositions; and remain open to alteration. The latter

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constitute the permanent indisputable element of Science. Of course a sharp line of division between the two can hardly be drawn, for many theories once considered soundly established have been attacked. Moreover it has happened frequently enough that that which was regarded as absolute truth a century previous, proved afterwards to be false. Nevertheless the existence of facts conclusively proved,—or at least the possibility of such facts—cannot be denied. No man of Science will be called presumptuous who ascribes universal validity to certain results of that Science of which he is a representative, or even demands for them unreserved acceptance.

Such is the position of Secular Science. But there exists another field of research which transcends all that is earthly, and which is *a supernatural science.* In this domain there are two kinds of questions. There are those which our intellect can solve, for example, that of the knowledge of God's existence. And on this point the Vatican Council has confirmed natural truth. But there exists another category of questions which surpass us, and with which we shall now exclusively occupy ourselves. Here is an example. Has not God, whose existence is known to us by our own natural powers, and who is recognized naturally by us as the Creator, Judge, or Rewarder of men, has not He wished to enter into special relations with man, and those of a superior order, between the moments of his birth and death? Should Science seek to deal with matters such as these, our purely

human powers of knowledge will be found to be absolutely insufficient. With their help alone it is impossible to respond to such questions in a manner free from doubt. It would be the greatest presumption for a mortal man to lay down a single principle concerning the matters of which we have last spoken, while claiming for them absolute authority.

Here the presumption does not lie in the fact that the thinker occupies himself with these sublime matters, wrestles with them, and strives to discover the deepest mysteries, and gathers them together in order to unravel whatever is within his reach. On the contrary, such work is to be commended. It sharpens the intellect, makes evident the difficulty of these problems, and counteracts wrong ideas and teachings carelessly advanced. Moreover a solution apparently in harmony with our nature can thus be found, such a solution as would be secured by theologians *ex convenientia*. Only it would be presumption if one were to esteem himself able of his own power, or even with the co-operation of many men of science, able definitely to resolve these lofty questions beyond all possibility of contradiction ; in a word, to think that one might with human means speak upon these heavenly things with the pretension of being recognized by all. By itself our intelligence can no more have a sure knowledge of our questions than can a man, without any extraneous knowledge, say anything of his own birth.

Without an illumination from above, the creature can acquire no certain knowledge of God from the

point of view with which we are now occupied. To pretend to do so would be to place oneself in a manner above Him, and treat Him as an object of research, about which the creature could give a personal judgment. It is right to declare as clearly and as resolutely as possible that such is an absolute impossibility ; that every attempt in this sense can only end in conjecture ; that such can only claim a greater or lesser degree of probability, and not certainty or insistent authority. It can here and there attain to probability ; its conclusions may often be allowed without exposing oneself to the charge of careless judgment. But in this matter, speaking from a purely human point of view, it is not possible to obtain certitude. In these investigations, as long as they are prosecuted by means purely human, there will be nothing certain.

Hence it follows that such knowledge of the supernatural can supply us with no foundation for hope, nor can it be a source of comfort or provide us with principles with which to direct our lives. The true conception of the world must comprise the *whole life* of man. That which is acquired by earthly means, however, offers no guarantee that the path we are pursuing is the right one. It renders us no support in affliction, calamity and death. *It is not religion.*

When we maintain, however, that we possess positive supernatural knowledge, we refer to divine revelation, transmitted through the Church and the Bible. Thus we believe that we have received that higher instruction which enables us to cross the

boundaries of secular research. But is not the fact of revelation itself supernatural knowledge, for the acquisition of which supernatural means are required? Who tells us that revelation proceeds from a higher world, and that it has been correctly transmitted? Does not such an assertion by a man, a body of men, or a religious community constitute one more gross act of presumption? We must leave this perfectly reasonable question alone for the present, and regard the matter entirely from the Christian standpoint in order to find first of all the one fixed basis on which our whole knowledge of God and of divine things rests. Only then can we examine the stability of that basis, and declare the guarantees which we have received for our faith. What we now suppose to be true will afterwards require valid proof.

According to Christian teaching there was a time when man existed in a state of perfect grace and holiness. Especially did he possess the virtue of Humility, in its full extent. He willingly submitted to the guidance and commands of the Most High, even when he did not understand their meaning. He did this although complete freedom of will had been granted to him. In return he received a certain measure of supernatural knowledge which God fittingly communicated to him. The first parents of our race possessed truths which doubt could not overcome; they possessed the One True Religion in that most simple form which their perfectly straightforward and simple circumstances demanded. Although we re-

ceive this knowledge about the primary state of man in the Christian teaching, yet at the same time whatever of it lies within the sphere of earthly Science, is of such a nature that it can not only withstand every attack, but has every prospect of finally being acknowledged as truth by that same Science. The unigenous origin of the human race more and more appears to be demanded by reason and a necessary inference from biological and historical premisses. The origin of the first pair of human beings and their relationship to God remains, of course, a supernatural question.

Now let us suppose that our first parents had not given way to presumption and fallen into sin, but, in company with their children, had permanently remained in possession of grace and holiness, and especially of Humility. There is nothing to forbid the view that, in such a case, mankind would have always possessed sufficient knowledge of God and divine things. Our father Adam, who had received the knowledge, could have transmitted it to posterity without thereby being guilty of presumption. What he did would have been in accordance with his natural relation to the human race and his original relation to God. There is no need to assume—because, though not precluded, it would have been unnecessary—that every individual would have re-examined by spiritual intercourse with the Most High the truth of the knowledge transmitted to him. Our first holy parent, to whom untruth would have been unknown, would have been sufficient guarantee of its validity. There

would have been no need to establish a special organization for preserving the treasure of knowledge, or a special teaching authority for guarding against misrepresentation and error.

This state of things did not come to pass, however, for our parents fell into sin before they begat children. Under the influence of temptation, there grew out of Free Will, Presumption, the craving to be free from Divine guidance, and to use the gift of self-determination against the Giver. *Pride engendered disobedience, which was sin.* Thus was the close intimate relationship with the Creator broken, and humanity henceforth left essentially to itself. Thus did the One True Religion vouchsafed to Adam lose its purity and surety, that is, its essence. Our first parent from the moment he sinned—although he did not lose the divine knowledge which he already possessed—became incapable of disseminating it unerringly. He had deprived himself of his sanctity, and, in consequence, the source of heavenly truth which he represented became defiled. He appeared no longer as the infallible teacher of humanity but only an ordinary witness of historical fact, and his evidence lacked full credibility. Since the Most High had turned away from him, no renewal of knowledge, no restoration of sanctity, could be hoped for.

Moreover, our parents had become subject to death. After their decease, the whole of supernatural knowledge—apart from isolated instances of illumination, about which we shall speak presently—had to rely on

oral tradition, handed down by fallible men whose strivings were, in the main, for worldly things. And so it inevitably came to pass that the idea of God and all doctrines allied to it, especially those referring to the moral law, degenerated, though supernatural knowledge continued to be a power among all nations whether they were highly civilized or not.

Certain main ideas were preserved, especially the notion of God, something about the creation of man, and the distinction between good and evil, as we find it even to-day, among nations that have never come under Christian influence. Nevertheless so disfigured and distorted was the original truth that its pure features could not be traced out with certainty. *From the moment of Adam's fall into sin there no longer existed any supernatural knowledge which could claim authority and universal validity.* Whoever boasted that he could give such knowledge to the world *was guilty of presumption.*

Had the original purpose of God run its course, the One True Religion would from the simple beginnings of primeval time have developed in conformity with the growth of the race under God's constant influence, and being ever without error, it would have reached a wonderful degree of sublimity. Deepest Humility towards God and man would have remained its characteristic mark, for, even for the sake of religious guidance and instruction, it would have been needless for anyone to exalt himself above his neighbour. Estrangement from God, however, caused the genuine seeds of re-

ligion to develop into multifarious, complicated, untrue formations to which the sinful spirit of man set its seal. Not Humility, but *pride* and *servility* were their distinguishing mark. Strong and subtle minds undertook the furtherance of religious doctrines and customs, and the guidance of souls. An imperious priesthood presumed to possess and proclaim the truth. Worldly supremacy was too often allied to their spiritual power, and nations submitted, hoping to receive heavenly gifts, and fearing divine punishments. Thus it sometimes happened that nations most advanced from a worldly standpoint became most degenerate in faith. Polytheism, brutal and cruel sacrifices, combined with immoral customs of all kinds, sprang up in profusion. Side by side with all this, a Science of the supernatural called *Philosophy* developed by the exercise of purely human intellectual powers. It endeavoured to reach the ultimate truths by means of meditation and a thorough investigation of nature, and also to establish a satisfactory system of morals and ethics. Though its motto was Liberation from hereditary views, it could not quite put aside the primary traditions which it found in the prevailing faith. Perhaps it was just this conservative undercurrent that enabled Philosophy to find some real truths, though it was unable to vouch for them. This much is certain, it was presumptuous and remained so, if Philosophy claimed to provide universally and absolutely valid facts. Therefore Philosophy, like the heathen religions, bore the mark of pride and presumption, at least on whatsoever

occasions it attempted to occupy the place of Religion.

Thus we see that Heathenism in general went astray in that which referred to the supernatural, and although now and then it inclined towards the truth, it could never be certain of its discoveries. The fact that the human race allowed itself to have firm convictions was the result of its arrogance and consequently unjustifiable. It bowed to an unauthorized teaching power.

Nor does the fact that these teachers of supernatural knowledge claimed to have *received direct inspiration from God* render the case any different. Such a claim is generally put forward by founders of religious systems in order to prove themselves infallible bearers of truth. But even if we were willing to grant the possibility of such mysterious revivals outside the Christian history of salvation, we should be unable to find any way of verifying the truth of their claim. Every clever impostor can plead heavenly revelations; every eccentric or morbid mind can experience "higher" inspirations.

To pose as one favoured by God, to declare that one was possessed of such inward experience, would be just as much a proclamation of supernatural knowledge as statements about heavenly things themselves. Unless some special and unmistakable corroboration of such knowledge was forthcoming it would be presumption to claim unconditional recognition from the human race. Mere performance of miracles would not be a sufficient corroboration of this kind, for, be-

sides the doubts which might ensue concerning their actual occurrence, much would depend on the authoritative interpretation of them,—again a supernatural question. It would be quite insufficient for the worker of miracles to declare: these miracles are performed in confirmation of my words. At most this could heighten their probability, and prepare the way for conviction and faith.

Many religions have been established and chiefly on the foundations of already existing doctrines and customs. Their founders have always succeeded in convincing bodies of men of the truth of their teaching, and induced them to accept their precepts. Others were then compelled by secular means to recognize the new organization. But it was impossible to bring back the One True Religion in this way, and especially because true Humility was wanting. Did not he to whom grace had been given for such a task, invariably exalt himself without warrant high above his fellowmen? How could he who boasted that he was singularly favoured by God, offer himself as an example and source of Humility? Had he still existed in a state of primeval sanctity, he might have been such, for he would have possessed Humility together with sanctity. But this sanctity and above all this humility had to be brought back again to the human race. This certainly could not be done by exalting one man above his fellows. Indeed all founders of non-Christian religions who assumed such a position of eminence were domineering men. They appeared

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as leaders, or as rulers, or as despots. The re-establishment of truth required an altogether peculiar, unique interference on the part of God Himself, and this interference could only achieve its object after a prolonged and wise preparation.

CHAPTER II.

PREPARATION FOR HUMILITY.

HAD Adam preserved his innocence, he would have been the natural mediator between God and man, the privileged custodian of the heavenly truths. The holy father of our race would have performed these duties in a true spirit of Humility towards God, without requiring any special exaltation for that office. The Fall, however, changed everything. In the presence of sin, man's knowledge of heavenly truths became debased. True, something of the original tradition remained, but the knowledge of higher truths was no longer an absolutely trustworthy heritage to the great mass of mankind.

The element of original tradition was preserved by means of *paternal authority*. Each generation delivered it to the succeeding. But whilst (had man not fallen), the authority of Adam and the ceaseless spiritual intercourse of all men with God would have ensured the faultless transmission of this tradition, it was, in consequence of the Fall, weakened and distorted, with the result that it became not only the subject of doubt but actually less in degree. If God desired to prepare an abiding place for truth on earth He Him-

self had to intervene by means of *direct revelations.* He could not communicate with all men in this way, for the great mass of mankind lived in a state of rapidly increasing sinfulness. He was able, however, to constitute one particularly worthy tribe the bearer of the true divine knowledge. This is what we must believe actually occurred. Certain references in Genesis to the dealings of God with man, seem to suggest it. What really happened may best be explained by a parable.

The most accurate timepiece in existence is the astronomical clock. It consists in the main of a heavy but minutely adjusted pendulum. Once set in motion this pendulum may swing for a long time without any perceptible decrease in the arc of oscillation, the seconds being measured faultlessly. But as soon as the oscillations become but a trifle weaker a certain force is automatically brought into play which corrects the arc of oscillation and secures a sufficiently accurate measurement of time. In a similar way, we can imagine divine revelation operating among the descendants of our first parents right down to the time of the patriarchs. These pious men handed on their supernatural knowledge by means of their paternal authority, but whenever error threatened, truth was preserved by the aid of instructions from God.

All knowledge of God and of His pure spirit, of creation, of the origin of man, of true morality and sin, was thus transmitted in direct succession, excepting only among those collateral lines which lapsed

into natural spiritual errors. When we come to Abraham, we find that he possessed, recognized and understood all these truths. From the time of the patriarchs this knowledge began to spread, new circumstances being added. Supernatural relations became much more intimate; their effects extended into the distant future; and the personal favours of God were augmented by promises of great moment, opening up entirely new prospects. The idea of a Covenant which is to be found as early as the story of Noah, becomes now distinctly impressed for the first time.

Abraham served God by a life well pleasing in His sight, and for this he was granted a numerous posterity, who should possess the land of promise, provided that they faithfully preserved the covenant. With Abraham the lineal transfer of spiritual knowledge ceased. It now began to diverge, and was transmitted to a whole people. Here also paternal authority was the first medium. We know, however, that this did not suffice to guarantee the truth of the knowledge, or to prevent a gradual decay of doctrine, which, indeed, continually occurred. The necessity of intervention on God's part as in former times became apparent. But how could this be done, seeing that an ever-increasing number of tribes and families were included? Could God reveal Himself repeatedly to ten, or a hundred, or a thousand families, in order to correct the minds that strayed? This was not impossible to the Almighty; but were all worthy? Would all accept God's teach-

ing, or would they not rather, in haughty exaltation over past favours, draw their own sinful inferences? This they certainly would have done, for the favours of God need a well-prepared soil, or else they bring forth disaster rather than blessing. Sinlessness was not required, but at least nothing less than a very special disposition towards holiness.

In the event, it was ordained that men of piety and spiritual strength should be chosen as guardians and teachers of the truth, irrespective of their family or tribal position. The first of these was the greatest: Moses. The faith of this mighty lawgiver being itself strengthened by communion with God, he was enabled to erect a strong barrier against the wanderings of his people. Not that he delivered a system of religious doctrines to the Israelites: that they had already sufficiently received traditionally from their ancestors. The work of Moses was *the realization of the Covenant with Abraham.* In the law—how far he formulated it cannot be discussed here—he proclaimed with heavenly wisdom what service God required from the people, and in the Promises he showed the grace which God was willing to grant them in return. Urged by the knowledge of the grace they had received in being led out of Egypt (an event deeply engraved on their minds, and one by which the divine mission of Moses was most clearly proved), the people willingly consented to perform that service.

The tribe of Israel had thus grown into an individual political organism, but it did not constitute a reli-

gious community which would ultimately develop into a world-religion by the continual admission of new members. It was rather a family sprung into a people, but shut off from the outside world, destined to preserve divine mysteries in its bosom, and to secure the veneration of the True God. Had the mysteries of God been committed to every nation, they would have been distorted as before; but here with God's assistance, they retained the power to protect themselves. In a narrow circle, not much endangered by heathen influences, they could impress men powerfully, so that at least in some individuals a truly pious character developed. These individuals became fit recipients of divine revelations, and, provided that their mental capacities sufficed, such revelations were granted to them. And so *Prophets* appeared who with holy zeal urged the people to be faithful to their covenant, kept them from falling away, and induced those who had strayed to return. They received knowledge from on high, by which they were able to predict punishment actually imminent, and promise actually intended rewards. Rarely has a fiercer spiritual battle been fought than on this limited sphere, where heavenly truth and genuine morality struggled with evil for their continued existence on earth, a small band of God-inspired men on the one side and on the other a people passionately obstinate and inclined to moral licentiousness.

It is a strange phenomenon that the good cause did not gain a decisive victory until the Jewish State was

temporarily destroyed, and the people led into captivity. Here, surrounded by heathens, the Israelites realized the degree to which their faith lifted them above other nations. Here the truth of the prophetic warnings was revealed and confidence in the prophetic promises strengthened thereby.

After the return from exile, it was therefore possible to construct a State more spiritual than secular, in which the sacred traditions found a far more secure basis than in the former times.

It is quite true that when for a long period all prophecy ceased, error inevitably reigned. The existing treasure of divine knowledge and laws did not become impaired in extent or mixed up with earthly knowledge, however. No,—one can say that just the reverse happened. Spiritual possessions gradually fell into oblivion because their real profound meaning was forgotten, and the letter became supreme. It was therefore the task of the last prophet, John the Baptist, to awaken afresh the torpid religious spirit of the people and to bear witness to the Messiah who had already appeared.

Now we have seen that the Israelites retained a knowledge of divine things which other nations possessed neither in the same degree nor in such purity of utterance. The question at once arises: *What guarantee was there that they did not deceive themselves and that their knowledge was in conformity with truth?* That knowledge rested in the first place on parental authority. From the beginning of the race it was to

have been transmitted from father to son in regular continuity. But we have seen that this transmission offered no security, that alterations and distortions were not precluded and that arbitrary additions were possible. Again, who could guarantee the reliability of the primeval tradition, and show that the whole fabric did not rest on an invention of the priests? A further foundation for spiritual truth was offered by the revelation given to patriarchs and prophets. But here those objections against such higher inspirations which we have mentioned before come into force. Who could examine their actuality, and who could prove that the respective assertions were correct? Was it not presumptuous for individuals to boast of such extraordinary favours, by which they were exalted above their fellowmen?

Even the reported miracles gave no complete certainty, as explained before. Therefore on closer inspection everything is again vague.

Now it may be pleaded that the traditions were written down at an early period. The sacred Scriptures gave an account of the story of the creation, of the primeval history of the human race, of the lives of the patriarchs, and of the development of the Israelitic nation. This is not the place to examine when and by whom they were written; in any case they came into existence within the period during which Israel grew into a people and a State. They were destined to present as a whole the supernatural knowledge in its combination with the history of the people, and

they claimed unconditional credibility. But even this foundation does not suffice in itself, because the credibility itself requires to be proved. If the traditions were correct at the time of their being written down, if the authors possessed true knowledge of them and reproduced that knowledge correctly by the help of divine illumination, then the Scriptures were indeed well adapted to secure the truth to future generations. But how could the validity of all these suppositions be guaranteed?

So much is sure; the Israelitic doctrine of God had no right to claim universal acknowledgment, at least not in the time of the old Covenant. If proclaimed to the heathen, it would have been opposed everywhere. What did the authority of patriarchs and the convincing power of the prophets and the sacred writings mean to the heathen? Their teaching and their information referred throughout to the people of Israel; they were difficult to understand, and therefore unconvincing. To the heathen the Israelitic religion was but one of many popular cults, a national doctrine, with which strangers had nothing to do. For the Israelites themselves, however, their doctrine needed no further guarantee, and could prevail in their hearts and in their State organization, thus acquiring greater solidity than the heathen cults.

Though each one of these supports seemed fragile by itself, yet they formed in their totality an extremely safe foundation, strong enough to convince the nation, because to the authority of the patriarchs, prophets

and Scriptures were added those events in the nation's life which by reason of their miraculous nature equalled revelation in value. These were sublime miracles performed not only in full view of the nation, but on the people of the nation themselves, and became impressed with the utmost force in their traditions, and repeatedly served as a support to their faith. And whenever a prophetic message was fulfilled, whether in a beneficent or destructive manner, the people were confirmed in their conviction that the prophet's words were true.

Therefore the Israelitic knowledge of God was *a national conviction*, not a truth which by its own strength could achieve or rightly demand universal recognition. And as a conviction it was quite sufficient, and fulfilled its purpose perfectly. On the foundation of this firm national faith of Israel, God's Kingdom was built up, and out of it grew the One True Religion which was in its turn to give conclusive sanction to this faith. *Only through Christianity has it been proved to all mankind that the supernatural knowledge of the Israelites was founded on truth.*

Now we must ask: what part did Humility play in the religious development of the Jews? Individuals were raised up from among the people to proclaim, in obedience to God's call, certain supernatural facts. Did not this give rise to vanity? Was not a bad example given and a spirit by no means in accordance with the future true religion nurtured?

In reply we must first remember that neither Moses

nor the prophets intended to proclaim anything new about God and divine things. They confirmed (rather than altered) every jot or tittle of the existing tradition. There was no presumption in this. They also proclaimed, on the strength of revelations, the will of the Most High; Moses by giving laws, the prophets by prescribing a certain attitude in view of certain events. These were evidences of higher knowledge, the correctness of which was somewhat but not altogether confirmed by miracles and fulfilment of prophecies. The prophets were indeed raised above their compatriots, and had their higher messages not been based on and confirmed by facts, their behaviour would have been most presumptuous. They certainly were in danger of becoming conceited, a calamity which purity of heart alone could prevent. And as this purity, like all else in the old Covenant, was but imperfect, there now and again appeared in conjunction with the Humility of the prophets towards God, a spirit of haughtiness towards their compatriots. In spite of all their virtues they were not teachers of Humility. It was not their office, nor were they able to bring back into the world the One true religion, the religion of Humility.

The prophets must however not be placed on the same level with heathen priests or non-Christian founders of religion. On the one hand they did not strive to dominate. They never attempted to win a retinue of followers by reprehensible means, by exciting superstitious fears, by conceding to popular

usages, to sensuous inclinations, or political schemes. Thereby they differed entirely from the false prophets who repeatedly appeared. Unlike them, they had to wage a severe warfare against carnal desires and unholy instincts; they were forced to support many things distasteful to the multitude, thereby bringing humiliations and disappointments on themselves which discouraged any rising vanity. Moreover they did not claim that their important utterances were final. *They always pointed to the future*, when the Saviour of the World would appear to confirm and complete their work in far greater perfection for the benefit of the whole human race. In all this they seemed, so to say, to refer to God for the reality of their election, for the correctness of their attitude and teaching, expecting that He would testify to all this with the most remarkable manifestations. They never dreamed of establishing the One true religion on the strength of God's communications; they rather looked upon themselves as inferior tools of the Most High, to be used by Him for preparing an abode for the religion which was to come, an abode in which their work would find an important place.

Thus heavenly Humility descended on the souls of these mighty ones who have impressed themselves so clearly in the old Covenant, and thus did it bestow in advance its beneficent influence upon them.

CHAPTER III.

RE-ESTABLISHMENT OF HUMILITY.

THE founders of religions whom we meet in history have always boasted of revelations from on high, and connexion with the heavenly powers. These revelations never formed the whole substance of their doctrinal edifice however, but represented only a few details which seemed to require special attestation. They mainly served to produce faith in the divine mission of the founder, and thereby gave a firm foundation to his teaching. His own supernatural wisdom, his capacity to fathom and to teach spiritual things, were to be made manifest by revelations. The doctrine itself was the founder's own work, and appeared as such; though he might perhaps ascribe the enhancement of his mental powers to divine influence.

To establish in this manner a religion which was justified in its claim to unconditional truth would have been an absurdity. To whatever height the human reason might be forced, the supernatural remained ever inaccessible. Conjectures and even probabilities might be advanced, but certainty could never be assured. The only irresistible element would be that of revelation, provided it was proved to be real.

Everything over and above it was human work and therefore subject to doubt.

Now we ask: might not an entire religion with all its doctrines and precepts have been communicated to some specially chosen and favoured man, authorized to obtain the world's recognition of it? Thus had it been with Moses, who forced on the people a complicated law which he had received in manifestation of God's will, though the ultimate attestation of that revelation in the presence of the whole human race was to occur only in the far future. In itself such a method is conceivable, though the comparison with Moses the founder of a State organization is applicable only in a small degree. One might fancy that God needed only to instil the spiritual knowledge into the chosen prophet, manifest His wishes and demands to him, then all would be well. Miracles and other manifestations would finally convince men of the truth of the message proclaimed to them. They then either would or would not comply according to their inward disposition, and would receive reward or punishment accordingly.

All this sounds very plausible, but it does not in the least accord with the meaning and nature of the One True Religion as it was to have been created, and, in fact, has been created in Christianity. It was by no means sufficient to procure for mankind a sure knowledge of supernatural things and burden their reason thereby, or lay upon them a universal law, an improved Mosaic code which they had to obey or be

punished. No, the offspring of Adam needed to be transformed in their inner life, to be re-established in a state of primitive sanctity and to be gifted with Love and Humility. Mere education and compulsion could not do this. *An example was required*, which placed perfect holiness before men's eyes; an example which by manifesting love inspired a return of love; an example which by showing true Humility combated the worst evil, prevailing pride.

We know that a man of Adam's race could not be employed for this. Even granted that the required degree of purity and love had been vouchsafed to some one or other, and was dwelling in him, the very fact of so lifting him up above his contemporaries for the purpose of proclaiming the truth would have given others the idea that his action was presumptuous, and caused a spirit of self-exaltation in the one selected who was but a weak mortal after all. Hence neither would conceit have been conquered nor Humility awakened. Even the highest manifestation of Humility would have borne the stamp of unreality. And if God created a new man and endowed him with the original sanctity of Adam that he might serve as teacher and example, what then? Such an one would have appeared to the sinful world as an adversary trying to set himself up as a master. Whatever merits he might have shown, he could not possibly have manifested Humility. The only thing possible would have been once more to bring about by the destruction of mankind the original condition out of

which the primeval religion had sprung, and that by the complete destruction and re-creation of the human race. Such would not have been in conformity with the relation between God and creation however, neither would it have constituted salvation for the *existing* race of men; and who would have guaranteed that the new Adam did not err like the first? In view of man's freedom of will such a fall was difficult to avoid. No, God did not wish to repeat His work like an architect who had failed. *He desired to perfect it according to existing conditions*, by manifesting a proportionately increased degree of love and wisdom. Thus, immediately after the Fall He gave that promise which indicated in embryo His plan of salvation.

The new true Religion, if it was to breathe real Humility and carry it to the world, could not be created by an *ascent*, but only by a *descent*, not by the exaltation of one of low degree, but by the *abasement of one naturally exalted*. Such has been accomplished, and *He who descended was God Himself*.

God was compelled to appear in a manner totally different from that of sinless primeval time however. He, the Invisible Spirit had communed with men spiritually without divesting Himself in any way of His dignity. There had been no need to meet men as their equal; even in His sublimity they had understood Him. Neither had it been necessary to set the virtues before them in example, especially that of Humility, for they were yet virtuous and humble. Nor had there been any need of abasement. But after the

Fall, apart from single revelations, intercourse of this kind was no longer possible, and would have been unable to bring about man's salvation. On the contrary, God was constrained to make Himself equal to man. He had to become man that He might thus combat by the deepest humiliation conceivable that destroyer of mankind, Conceit. None but the wonderful and incomprehensible Being, *The Triune God*, could make this descent possible, the knowledge of the mystery of whose Being places Christianity immeasurably higher than all other religions. The second person of the Godhead, being united in will with the Father, took upon Himself our human nature that He might give us mortals an example by the complete submission of His will to God. Humility had been given to men at the creation as a power to guide their lives, but unholy influences had cast it out. Pride reigned over succeeding generations. By a stupendous manifestation of itself, Humility now returned to the human race. The Son of God descended on earth in the form of man, *that He might undergo the deepest humiliations* in full obedience to the Father. The Eternal God took a human form. The nature of the Creator united with that of the creature to form one Person, Jesus born of a Woman. As such He acquired the legal relationship, and accepted the duties of a creature. He showed forth His willingness to submit His human will to that of God, and also, as far as was in conformity with His task, to that of His earthly superiors, though as God He realized His infinite superiority to them. In this

Spirit of true Humility He acted towards all earthly institutions, including those of the family, the State, and religious worship. Nothing human, except sin, remained foreign to Him. In His human nature *He was a new and holy Adam*, born into the depraved human race of His time.

Now was the ban removed that had prevented the revelation of the one, authoritative, indubitable religion. Had Adam remained free from sin, he, as the first among men and the father of them, would have been the teacher of his race both in natural and supernatural things. There was nothing overbearing in this, neither would it have caused conceit, for Adam was truly holy. On the other hand there would have been no particular manifestation of Humility in Adam's acceptance of a teacher's office, as men in their purity would not have required such demonstration. But all sinful men, after the Fall, to whom God would have assigned a similar exalted position, would have become more and more conceited, or would at least not have been patterns of Humility such as the new conditions required. With Jesus Christ, who was both God and man, it was quite different. By the fact that He accepted the office of teacher, and transmitted heavenly messages to men, he appeared as the prototype of Humility. In Him it was not presumption, but rather unprecedented condescension.

Now this prototype of Humility, Jesus Christ, possessed divine knowledge to a degree of completeness and perfection which neither Adam nor any man en-

dowed with revelation could ever attain. To Him, who was God, the depths of the Godhead were disclosed. He who knew the Father as He did Himself, could give men a perfectly true account of God. Yea, even more, He could place God before men's eyes, because He Himself was like unto the Father. His nature, which He manifested to the world, was that also of the Father. Thus did the One True Religion, founded by Jesus, receive a foundation which nothing could ever shake, and in founding it our Lord had not to depend on isolated revelations from above, supplemented by the activity of human reason. He carried within Himself the whole wisdom of God, an inexhaustible fount from which He could ever draw. He was both Giver and Teacher of Revelation, God and Prophet in one person. The prophets had but a few single hours of exaltation and inspiration, the result of which they communicated extensively to their compatriots. Jesus possessed throughout the whole of His earthly Life—short indeed it was—and especially during His ministry, the full and uninterrupted perception of heavenly truth. He was able not only thoroughly to proclaim the characteristic features of the new True Religion to those who would receive it, but he could also plant it securely into their souls. This religion became marked out by certain events and acts, by His martyr's death and His resurrection.

Jesus, as incarnate God could stand high above the human race while preserving a truly humble mind; He could show His Humility to men while as their

authoritative teacher giving to them the highest divine wisdom. But one preliminary condition had to be fulfilled, or else the proper end could not be attained: *the attestation of His divinity before men.* If He was not recognized as God, He would not be recognized as an example of Humility; on the contrary His attitude would appear as the unprecedented self-exaltation of an ordinary mortal. In His whole appearance, Jesus was man, purely man, an equal among equals. When he communicated divine knowledge His hearers naturally thought that He was but some noble, wise compatriot who had placed Himself above them of His own authority, in order to teach them, to give them laws, thereby making Himself guilty of presumption.

Now John the Baptist, whose prophetic character was established, testified to the Messianic nature of Jesus. In conformity with that Testimony Jesus Himself was baptized as Messiah. He performed miracles that could be wrought only by God or with divine help. Many therefore believed in Him; called Him the Son of God. But did this sufficiently fulfil that preliminary condition which alone could prove Him a truly humble founder of a religion?

By no means. In the face of all these testimonies, Jesus still appeared only as one commissioned by the Most High, one to whom a particularly comprehensive authority had been given, one to whom a position especially near to God had been granted similar to that of an adopted son. Even those who believed in

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Him saw in Him a man raised up to a great Height and not a God who had brought Himself low. Neither did Jesus at first expect more than this. His adherents could not reproach Him with presumption, but neither could they understand the deep humiliation, which His appearance involved. His enemies saw nothing but pride and arrogance in all He said and did.

A special and extraordinary revelation was required to communicate the most vital truth of all to the human race, and render an authoritative testimony to the divinity of Jesus. This revelation could not proceed from the Lord Himself, since it concerned Him. All His declarations about His own divine nature could acquire undoubted validity only by His being acknowledged as God, because even the acknowledged Messiah could not effectively declare Himself to be God. It was not to be expected of the Israelites that they should recognize His Divinity, because they did not possess the required positive insight into the Old Testament. Therefore what required to be proved, i.e. the divine nature of Jesus, had to be pre-supposed, and thus an argumentation of the proof was impossible. Consequently the transmission of the great mystery on which Christianity, the Religion of Humility, was to rest, could only proceed from the Father. He alone was the God of the Israelites. They had no clear conception of the Son. This necessity of the Father's testimony is an inevitable result of *reflection*, and has been fulfilled in that *reality*, which the Gospels report. The one supports the other.

The story of St. Peter's profession of faith at Cæsarea Philippi[1] is well known. On the Lord's question to the Apostles "Whom think ye that I am?" Simon Peter answered: "Thou art Christ, the Son of the Living God". He understood this truth in a new and more perfect sense than did the other followers of the Lord when they spoke of the Son of God, for Peter uttered his declaration as a contrast with all opinions expressed hitherto.[2] Jesus must have looked upon it in the same way, for otherwise, if He had seen in this profession only an already frequently expressed view He would not have answered it with a declaration of such astonishing magnitude. Our Lord replied: "Blessed are thou, Simon Barjona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed this to thee, *but My Father who is in Heaven*". He meant to say: No man, not even I, who am God manifested in the flesh, has revealed this unto you, but the spiritual God, the Father, by mysterious spiritual inspiration. Peter was therefore the first witness to the sublime mystery, the Sonship of God in Jesus. On the certainty which had been vouchsafed to him, which lived in him by divine inspiration, that of the Apostles and all the followers of Jesus henceforth rested. Therefore the great promise was immediately added: "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church".

What happened is to be understood thus. Peter

[1] Matt. xvi. 13-20.

[2] The Protestant J. Grill confirms this *The Primacy of Peter*, p. 2, but uses it for contesting the genuineness of this passage.

has acquired in wonderful manner, not in that moment, but during his whole intercourse with Jesus, the conviction, firm as a rock, that Jesus is God. This conviction is now established, and is never more to be effaced. Jesus is to him the Son of God in the most literal sense of the words, and hence an authoritative religious teacher, to whose judgment he bows unconditionally in everything. For the present he has no certain knowledge how this faith has come to him, or why it is so firm. But immediately after his profession Jesus, who now appears to him as the authoritative teacher, gives him an infallible explanation. Our Lord affirms that God the Father has inspired St. Peter in a wonderful manner, and that He Himself planted the highest truth in Peter's soul. Therefore the succeeding fundamental promise rested on the teaching power of Jesus, a teaching power which in the estimation of Peter was divine.

With this, God attained His end. The One True Religion had received its foundation, and Jesus was enabled to build up the edifice. To His followers He had become the God of revelation, though not a God sublimely enthroned and granting now and then some mysterious revelation, but rather a God profoundly abased, speaking to men as a man, performing His actions in their presence, and suffering through them. From Him believers could learn Humility, and not only Humility manifested in actions, but Humility deep-seated in the mind. Just as he, the God-man, presented it to the Father, so men ought to offer it to

God and to each other in order to win back by Jesus' assistance the Godliness which the race has lost. Such is now within the realms of possibility. Christ pointed out the way by His life and ministry.

But this is not all. Through Grace received from God the Father, Peter had become a witness comparable to the prophets of the old Covenant, and yet different from them. Those (and, as the last of them, John the Baptist) proclaimed that the Messiah was an ambassador of God; Peter proclaimed that the Messiah *was* God. Through him the fundamental doctrine of the Old Testament received its New Testament interpretation. Like the old prophets he testified to a supernatural fact. The confirmation of his truthfulness stood primarily on the same level as that of the old prophets. In both cases strange events occurred which spoke for the correctness of their utterances. On former occasions it was the miracles which the individual prophet performed and other subsequent events which could well be considered the fulfilment of his prophecy. This time it was the pure life, the sublime doctrine, the superhuman deeds of the Man who was attested as God.

All this, however, could count as a convincing proof neither here nor there, because both he who had declared and he who had interpreted the truth were one and the same. The whole rested on the self-consciousness of Peter, which undoubtedly gave his words the same powerful, stirring force as those declarations of the prophets possessed. But now quite an extra-

ordinary and unique sanction was added, such as had never happened before in the old Covenant.

At first, there came an apparent refutation, which caused confusion and horror in the minds of the Apostles, including Peter. Jesus, whom they had recognized as God, fell into the hands of His enemies and was sentenced to death, which was carried out in a most cruel manner. It is difficult to realize how this must inevitably have impressed men who carried in their hearts a supernaturally created faith in the divinity of their Master. The whole world seemed to totter. And yet we may assume that at least Peter preserved a certain confidence. Or was this perhaps taken from him temporarily by the great sin of his denial and consequent loss of sanctifying grace? I do not think that such exception should be surmised.

But now came the Resurrection. Out of this apparent refutation arose a most glorious corroboration of the great doctrine. Others had already wakened up from bodily death to a bodily life; such were the daughter of Jairus, the young man of Nain, and Lazarus. They had been awakened, however, but Jesus rose from the grave by His own power. They had risen up with their bodies still mortal, Jesus had risen in glory and immortality. He did what only God could do, and, in so doing, proved Himself to be God. It must be strongly emphasized *that it was not the Resurrection which gave to the Apostles faith in the divinity of Jesus, but their faith in that divinity which led them to the unconditional joyful acknowledgment*

of His resurrection. Had their faith not been already firmly rooted, they would very probably have behaved quite differently in view of the event. Maybe they would have believed themselves obsessed by some uncanny apparition, trembled with horror and fled from their Master. Slowly, very slowly, they might have acquiesced in the unprecedented, in that which was *contrary to all natural law and experience.* But as it was, the appearance of the living Lord at once seemed to them the *correct and lawful means* by which the recent awful confusion was readjusted, the incomprehensibility of His suffering and death set right, and all things restored again to their right condition. Hence their radiant blessed joy, somewhat restrained by natural doubts in but a few.

Such was the decisive event by which the divinely inspired conviction and teaching of St. Peter received its valid sanction then and in all time, a confirmation before which the whole army of hostile critical Science stands perplexed, striving with irrational and quite impossible theories to undo it, and using methods which force a smile from the lips of the accomplished historian.

Not only the Apostles, but many Israelites became witnesses of this unique miracle which to Peter was a trophy of victory, and with which he proclaimed his conviction of the Divine Sonship of Jesus to the human race, a conviction which had already been his long before.

We have seen that God the Father, by sending His

Divine Son had given to men that teacher whom they needed, a teacher and guide filled with superhuman knowledge, endowed with supernatural gifts, and yet manifesting deep Humility. God the Father confirmed Him in this position as Son of God by immediate spiritual inspiration to St. Peter, and, through him, the other Apostles, who were thus enabled to receive from Him with full understanding the One True Religion of Humility. Moreover the testimonies of Peter and the other Apostles were wonderfully ratified before their contemporaries by the unprecedented miracle of the Resurrection.

The question we now have to answer is the means by which the blessed message and faith's conviction of its reality were preserved to posterity, and how heavenly truth was kept unsullied through the ages.

CHAPTER IV.

THE PRESERVATION OF HUMILITY.

We have found the basis which we claim to be the only firm one in the world of supernatural knowledge. Jesus Christ, the Man who taught this knowledge in complete fullness, and who founded the Christian religion as the One True Religion, is at the same time God, the Lord who knows absolutely all that concerns the supernatural world, is Himself the Highest object of the supernatural knowledge. He, the Almighty Lord, has humbled Himself to become man, and has thereby set the mark of genuineness, the seal of Humility, on His religion.

Jesus is God. Extremely perfect and forcible are the proofs in support of this tenet: His own witness, the credibility of which is supported by the unassailable purity of His life, the eminence and unique character of His miracles, the sublimity, depth and singular morality of His doctrines, the unmistakable Humility of His character; the enthusiastic testimony, sprung from firmest conviction, of Peter and the Apostles, which was powerful enough to lead many thousands to the same faith and which stood the test of the martyr's death; the resurrection of Jesus from the

dead, the actuality of which historical science in its fullness cannot disprove, but only confirm; the clear evidence that the life and death of Jesus are the fulfilment of prophecies authentically proclaimed centuries before, and which are completely in harmony despite their independence from one another. All this and much besides must convince any impartial student that the foremost article of faith in the Christian religion, Christ's Divine Sonship, is founded on truth.

Especially is this so with the historian; if he be but honest and well versed in his science, he cannot close his eyes to this conviction.

If one wishes to examine a historical fact or a combination of facts, the aims of some personality or anything of that kind, all existing sources must be searched; verbal traditions, chronicles and any existing institutions connected with the object of research must be carefully investigated before an answer can be formulated. Then another examination is required to see whether that answer harmonizes in every respect with the sources. That being the case, it is safe to consider that answer correct. Any experienced scientist will recognize a wrong solution by the discrepancies which it bears with the sources, unless these are exceptionally scanty. Sometimes it is possible by means of ingenuity to adjust such a solution so that it agrees to a certain extent with the sources, but the result will always appear forced and unsatisfactory. With this many, for want of something better, may be content, but at heart they cannot

believe in it, and must always fear any new discovery which might destroy their position. The true scientist does not hesitate to admit incorrectness or improbability in such a case. The correct solution, on the contrary, manifests itself immediately by its perfect lucidity. It appears as a key which opens every door, not only to one question in particular, but also to many secrets connected with it. It is a light in darkness. With joyful conviction the man of Science will accept it, eager to see it confirmed by further discoveries. And whilst in the case of wrong solutions every investigator will try a different way for adjusting the answer with the sources, the various representations will in the main agree perfectly with one another if the solution is correct.

Thus it is with the question of how the personality of Jesus is to be interpreted. If He is looked upon as a mere man, difficulties upon difficulties present themselves. The greatest mental acumen and a profuse imagination are required to bring the sources, the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, into harmony with this opinion. Without any justification, passages are struck out, or declared as spurious, sentences interpreted or supplemented; qualities, dispositions and intentions are imputed to persons, events are denied or misrepresented, until at last a purely human image of the Lord is the result, and one, at the best, very grotesque. Improbabilities, if not impossibilities are dealt with in plenty. And, naturally, every inquirer works differently, and each arrives at a different result.

If, however, Jesus is looked upon also as God, according to the oldest Church doctrine, no serious disharmonies will be detected. On the contrary, everything explains itself in the most satisfactory manner, and the more profound the research, the more perfect the result. A bright light illumines all obscurities. *The homely Bible, Old and New Testament alike, at once lives. It becomes radiant; it glows and sparkles with magnificent truths.* There are none of the deeper contrasts left in the work of research. Harmony and Unity reign and most convincingly prove the correctness of this solution.

We shall, however, by no means be finally content with this proof, but rather accept this conclusion only provisionally, that we might acquire a basis on which to build up our arguments.

The faith which recognizes that Jesus is the Son of God, includes the assent of faith to all His doctrines. This fact can consequently act in a twofold manner, retrogressively by confirming doubtful truths of former times, and in advance by transmitting reliable truths to posterity. It is Jesus who by His word sanctions the sacred Scriptures of the old Covenant with regard to their supernatural contents, who puts the seal of genuineness to the whole of Old Testament prophecy and vouches for the divine origin of all revelations of that time. Previous to His appearance, those supernatural things had been considered by the Israelites to be trustworthy and sufficiently authenticated. Humanity as a whole, however, did not attach any value

to them. They now received, for all those who believed in Christ, the character of well-established indubitable facts of spiritual import. At the same time it was now proved that those prophets had not been presumptuous when they spoke of their communications with God and undertook to teach supernatural things.

Moreover that part of the Old Testament prophecy which looked backwards and gave knowledge of the unsearchable primeval times, of the creation, the Fall into sin and the times of the Patriarchs, could now, under the authority of the Son of God, be looked upon as disclosing supernatural truth, all the more, as all that knowledge was most wonderfully in accordance with the appearance of the Saviour, and contained many references to Him. *He, in whom the whole amazing edifice of the history of salvation found its crowning glory, invested it at the same time with unshakable strength.*

But how about the future? How were these things, already achieved, to be guarded, how was the new, the only true religion, the religion of Humanity to be preserved for posterity in such a way that the most distant generations, that we, the people of to-day, might remain unconditionally convinced of its truth? That is, after all, the chief consideration for us.

We know that once before in the primeval time before the Fall men had enjoyed the true religion. At that time it had degenerated so soon as God took His hand from the guilty parents of our race. Then a whole medley of religions sprang up and only in one

tribal succession were these main truths preserved, out of which a further growth could develop. Now the present position is very similar. The Son of God lived, worked on earth and founded a new religion, which, in its chief tenets, became a lasting possession for the men of that time as far as they were believers. Jesus did not live on earth for ever in bodily form, however, but returned to Heaven. Consequently He could no more than Adam retain for Himself the office of teacher. Anew humanity stood alone in face of the supernal God. Anew the difficulty arose as to how the gracious revelations of God and human Humility could work together harmoniously. It seemed that the world would once more be dependent on prophets who rested on their own authority, if not for their doctrine at least for its interpretation and developments. It was to be expected that, even if unity was preserved for a time, opinions would gradually diverge, as they had done in primeval times; and that, as widely different views of God the Father, His works and laws had then gained prevalence, so they would now prevail concerning Jesus and His works and precepts. Leading men would probably become proud and arrogant rather than humble, especially if they claimed to have received revelations. This would be quite enough to destroy the work which Jesus had established.

The Saviour had prevented such a development during His earthly life however. Not that He had excluded from His religion all possibility of error and secession, but He had secured for it a lasting and

unimpaired stability within the human race, and had preserved the union of Humility and truth within a certain communion. Whilst on earth, Jesus Christ, speaking as man to men, had assigned the teaching office in solemn, clear and intelligible manner to His Apostles, commissioned them to transfer that office in the same way to suitable successors. In humble obedience they had undertaken it, and in the same humble obedience their successors, the elders and bishops whom they had consecrated, could also undertake it. *They were led in all truth and preserved from error by the Holy Ghost whom Jesus had promised whilst on earth.* This is a fact proved by the perfect conformity of their doctrines. Arrogance, presumption and independent assertion of spiritual facts were quite absent. Their teaching was the teaching of Jesus; their actions were only such as Jesus had ordained, without addition or innovation. Whatever appeared as new was merely more distinct, needful deduction which the power granted them by their Master authorized them to make. Certainly every instance of more distinct expression, every new deduction, if it claimed authoritativeness, was bound to mean a spiritual manifestation, because the final and valid choice between the many different utterances and deductions possible could not be made by natural powers alone. It was Jesus the Son of God who gave the ability to arrive at such decision which was therefore of heavenly origin. And Jesus continued to work in His Apostles through the Holy Ghost,

that the One True Religion might be correctly developed.

The Apostles founded individual Churches which were in touch with one another from the beginning, and formed One Universal Church, the living organism of the community of all the faithful. This became the bearer of the revelation; its administrators, the elders and bishops, received from the Apostles the power and the right to elaborate its doctrine, institutions and laws. They, too, were no independent founders of religion or teachers of a new faith. Only in fullest obedience, in most perfect Humility towards Christ and the Apostles, and under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, were they able to build up the edifice as required. At that time certain prophets appeared who had received special revelations from above. Nevertheless their utterances had authoritative value only in so far as they were acknowledged by the leaders of the Church. Here, and not with the favoured ones, lay the right of decision.

The Universal Church created for herself the instruments by which she spoke, the Synods and Councils. They ensured firm cohesion and prevented dissensions in doctrine, customs and institutions. In order to make this possible in those assemblies of many and diverse minds, a leading power, which, like a strong keel to a vessel, gave solidity to the whole was set up for them. This power rested in a unique manner on the authority of the Son of God, Jesus Christ.

A singularly sublime position in God's Kingdom on

earth had been granted by His Master to St. Peter, who, thanks to the immediate grace of the heavenly Father, had been the first to believe in the divinity of Jesus. He was commissioned to feed the lambs, i.e. to lead the faithful as their bishop. He also was given the task of guiding the sheep, and thus was he rendered supreme over the bishops. *The Primacy over the whole Church belonged to him, and to his successors in office, that is to the Bishops of Rome.* This is not the place to prove this fact in detail. Moreover Peter and after him the Roman See, as the Rock of the Church, had to preserve the deposit of faith intact whenever necessity arose. The assistance of the Holy Ghost had been promised him for this purpose. This was not a manifestation of independent, assumed sovereignty, but a heavy duty undertaken in a spirit of obedience, a duty which Peter himself performed unto his martyrdom.

We have proved that the whole Church with all her instruments is closely attached to the person of Christ. Nowhere do we meet presumption, arrogance, arbitrariness, as in the heathen religions. Here, there is only Humility and obedience, from the founder to the last follower, from the highest to the lowest. The Son of God, humbly obedient to the Father, has created as man among men, the spiritual work. Humbly performing the intentions of the Master, the disciples in their turn indicated it to the human race, zealous always to preserve the path set out for them. Humbly accepting the tasks transmitted to them, the

later leaders of the Church have continued the work, building up in accordance with the intentions of their instructions the grandest organization, embracing the whole world. Though, as is inevitable among sinful men, much error has occurred, though various members, even among the highest, have been attacked by the miserable pride as of old, and been led to destruction, especially in times when outward splendour prevailed; nevertheless *Humility has ever remained in the Church herself as an indelible, distinctive mark.* Even in times of furthest decline, this mark remained clearly perceptible to the penetrating observer.

This uninterrupted succession of administrators of the Church, who were very early called bishops, is an exceedingly important fact, because it was brought about by the supernatural act of sacramental consecration. Only through this medium the supernatural activity of the Churches, their doctrinal teaching, the administration of the Sacraments, and the management of the Churches remained combined with Humility, through it alone Humility remained predominant in Christianity. All such activity necessitated a divine mandate; but this mandate could be clearly recognized only in so far as it was traceable to Jesus Christ living in the Flesh, and not to some heavenly grace quite beyond the power of verification. Adversaries of the Church therefore invariably attempt to tear asunder the sacramental bond which unites the bishops and the Apostles. So weak are their arguments, however, that they rather result in a confirmation of that bond, and

that in proportion to the thoroughness of their research. One always feels with such adversaries as these that they seek to avoid at all costs the natural solution of the problem, which is the true one, and therefore treasure up every single fact which they feel will tell against it. Such research is certainly neither genuine nor unprejudiced.

Now the question arises concerning the manner in which we can arrive at full certainty as to the spiritual knowledge which we have received through the medium of Jesus and the Church. Peter obtained faith in the Sonship of Christ by supernatural illumination, and through him each of the other Apostles. For them, therefore, the Master's doctrine was the Word of God, and indubitable. They possessed a firm foundation on which they could stand and build. But that was long ago. Who testifies to us now that all that is true? Historical research is something human, subject to error, even though founded on sacred books. Again, it is true that the life of Jesus and the activity of the Apostles has been carefully chronicled by reliable men; and there exist letters written by the Apostles which from the earliest times have been considered genuine and of high value. But though the opinion of the Church in their regard is firm, that of the scientists is still very unstable. Who knows to what results Science may still come? Therefore we cannot base our faith in spiritual and supernatural things, and our hope for time and eternity, on the written word alone.

We need an illumination of the mind, a knowledge similar to that of Peter, which rests on firm ground. Now the Church has for all time occupied the place of Christ. In her He lives and works. *What Jesus was for the Apostles, that the Church is for us.* Only through her are we in connexion with Him. Just as Peter acquired faith in the divinity of Jesus, so we must acquire faith in the divinity of the Church. That is the only way. To acquire definite spiritual knowledge by experiences of the soul and by heavenly inspiration and without a medium, is a very doubtful venture, though it were only the knowledge of the divinity of Christ. The certainty which will withstand every trial and opposition will hardly be gained that way.

Peter was one of those Israelites who waited for the coming Messiah from a heartfelt need of salvation. We must first of all feel the need of salvation in the same way. Peter followed our Lord in humility and came to know Him in all His purity, wisdom and sublimity of character, and from this knowledge resulted faithful obedience to His teaching. Just so we must turn to the Church in Humility in order to understand her in all her purity, wisdom and sublimity, and live according to her precepts. As a reward Peter received that inspiration from the heavenly Father, by which his Master was revealed to his eyes as the Son of God. Just the same reward is vouchsafed to us; as a consequence of those endeavours, heavenly Grace develops in us the conviction—not that this or

that dogma is true, or that Jesus combines human and divine nature in Himself, or some other doctrine,—*but that that Church which we see before us, is divine.*

Now this faith can be prepared in many ways, by intercourse with pious members of the Church, by insight into the imperfections of other creeds, or even by faithful membership of other Churches, by scientific examination of doctrines, and so on. The decisive agent, however, is always the Grace of God, which causes the interior change. A man can only be put into communication with the spiritual world by spiritual means. This explains why it is always impossible to win over by instruction those who resist or are religiously indifferent. To such, the spiritual element is closed and incomprehensible.

Though we have to tread the same path with Peter, we are in an incomparably more favourable position. The Apostle received only the seed of the new religion from which with his help the buds were to be evolved. We, however, have at our disposal the mighty tree, laden with fruit. For two thousand years the Church has with the most painstaking zeal striven to develop Christ's doctrine, in the face of opposition, and in conflict with error; and yet that doctrine has suffered no change. As a teacher, she is therefore much more comprehensive than our Lord. This does not merely admit of explanation, it is inevitable. The Church comes in contact with innumerable people, with people of every degree of culture, most diverse in spirit and attachments, and she has to do justice to all these,

By means of her, a great deal of uncertainty and obscurity has been cleared up.

First of all the true nature of Christ was firmly established only after a prolonged struggle with difficulties, as also His position in the Holy Trinity and the relation of His human to His divine nature. One might be inclined to consider this research into the nature of our Lord both presumptuous and a denial of the spirit of Humility due to the Redeemer. That is a mistake. It was the cause of Jesus which the Church advocated, and He was active in this very work. The whole so-called Christology, as far as the Church is occupied with it, is, so to say, Christ's witness to Himself. He unveils Himself more and more by the medium of the Holy Ghost.

The Church also decided in detail concerning the authority of Holy Scriptures. Christ, when He walked in the flesh, had only recognized and expressed in general terms its position as a source of faith, and that in a limited number of instances. In coming to these decisions the Church always made use, and does so now, of all applicable secular Science, both natural and historical. Every assured result finds full consideration, whilst a very justifiable caution is exercised towards unproved hypotheses which in our days spring up in abundance in the field of primeval research. So little is the popular reproach that the Catholic Church holds aloof from Science justified, that rather the contrary is true. The Biblical Science of to-day, even that which is Protestant, is hailed with joy. Catholic

scholars take a share in it in increasing numbers, and do not fear for the safety of established supernatural facts.[1]

On the doctrine of the Church therefore rests our assured knowledge of the Creation, the primeval state of men, the primitive revelation and its continuance, the relation of God to the people of Israel, the spiritual significance of the prophets, and all other facts which have been noted in the former chapters. *It is under the Church's prestige that the whole supernatural and spiritual validity of the Bible endures.*

Faith in the divinity of the Church is a heavenly gift of grace acquired by sincere longing for salvation and humble endeavour. This does not mean, however, that it rests only on a spiritual basis and is devoid of credentials. This faith embraces so much that is matter for human reflection and discussion that it can be very thoroughly tested. The striking manner in which it stands this test constitutes its fullest justification. To this is added the perceptible effect of all the blessings which the Church offers and chiefly that of the most *Holy Sacrament of the Altar*, of which every Catholic can amply convince himself. This cannot be discussed here in detail however. Verily, no fact is more firmly attested than the divinity of Holy Church, and on it is founded the One True Religion, the Religion of Humility.

[1] Compare Norbert Peters: "Die grundsätzliche Stellung der Kath. Kirche zur Bibelforschung".

CHAPTER V.

DENIAL OF HUMILITY.

DIRECTLY after man's Fall into sin, when immediate intercourse with God ceased, the danger arose that in connexion with the existing knowledge, men would form their own ideas about heavenly things, and create out of their own minds religious doctrinal systems. For a long time this danger was not apparent, and men continued to live on that knowledge handed down to them by tradition. But gradually they began to enter upon wrong paths, and develop various forms of mythology. Only in one tribe did the correct knowledge remain, preserved through divine influence, though imperfect and to a limited extent.

An analogous condition is found after the death of Jesus Christ. Here too there existed the danger that believers would form arbitrary ideas of Him and His work, and that they would give out of their own minds a varied rendering of His doctrines. In this way multifarious creeds would develop, the value of which it would be difficult to judge. Jesus met this danger in the best possible way by creating a widely ramified and sacramentally united sacerdotal system, which was called and by special grace qualified to guard the

truth. But the danger was thus by no means averted. It soon appeared in a most destructive form. The conceit which had been vanquished only with so great difficulty, arose again to rob humanity of the fruits of victory.

At that time Philosophy had borne fruits beautiful, varied and plentiful, and had attained to a high state. Many of its most capable representatives turned to the new faith, whose rich store was calculated to fructify abundantly their own Science. But was it likely that these acute minds, accustomed to regard the spiritual domain as their own, and freely to cultivate it, was it likely that they all would at once agree to be set within the fixed sphere of ecclesiastical doctrine? That so many Philosophers bowed unconditionally to the Church's teaching is indeed admirable, and testifies to the divine power of the Gospel. But there were some who could not view the position aright, and who wished to make the Gospel serve their Science, and not their Science subservient to the Gospel. These presumed to interpret and develop Christianity according to their own philosophical ideas. The first great error, the *Gnosis*, was a product of their pride, of their professional conceit, which did not heed the doctrine and organization of the Church, and undertook to formulate something new out of the heritage of Jesus on its own authority. The Gnosis was overcome by the firm concord of the true body of the faithful by the rigid persistence of the episcopal teaching authority to which humble obedience is due.

The struggle which here ensued was one between the two old traditional foes, Pride and Humility, as also on many minor occasions. It was essential that Humility was victorious, if the Church, the One True Religion was not to perish. It was not to perish. It was not to be permitted that anyone without divine authority should proclaim superhuman knowledge, even if it was only in elucidation of canonical doctrine. *Every untrue feature in the image of Christ and His Gospel—if it concerned fundamental doctrines—meant destruction to the whole*, for out of such untrue feature more and more untrue inferences must follow. Unconditional correctness could only be claimed for teachings and doctrines acknowledged ever since the time of the Apostles, and those deduced therefrom under the prestige of the Church as a whole. Only those offices authorized for teaching through Christ's appointment would be certain of the assistance of the Holy Ghost.

Now it is quite true that pious and learned men were able by careful research and acute meditation to discover much that is correct, also on the field of faith and doctrine. Laymen and priests endeavoured thus to increase the store of knowledge for the use of Christendom. But if true Christian Humility dwelt in them, they did not dream for a moment that their discoveries were authoritative and unassailable on the strength of their own testimony, they only valued them when ecclesiastical attestation was granted to them. If they acted differently they were guilty of presumption, and supported with their opinion a false doctrine,

even though their results were perhaps in themselves consistent with the truth. *Superhuman, spiritual knowledge could never be ascertained except with superhuman spiritual assistance.*

Grievous times broke over Christendom just when it had gained supremacy in the Roman Empire, times in which the old unity threatened to break up. Even among the bishops who had the right to teach, serious differences of opinion arose concerning most important questions of doctrine, e.g., the nature of Jesus Christ. It would be wrong to say of either of these parties that it did not possess Humility; for each, whether right or wrong, was acting within its jurisdiction in attempting to make truth prevail. Only when a Council had pronounced a decision would any individual bishop who still resisted and clung to his own opinion be accounted guilty of presumption. Doubt as to whether the Church as a whole, represented by the totality of her bishops, was authorized to fix the faith permanently was never tolerated, however; that was divine law.

The fact that the doctrine about Councils themselves had to be developed also became clear during these contests. What was meant by "Church as a whole," "totality of bishops"? How were they to be summoned? Who should give the decision, an absolute majority, a fixed large majority, or all the members without exception? None of these modes was possible or, in reality, workable. An absolute majority was unfair, and would of necessity lead to schisms, because the greater weight often lay with the

minority. On the other hand to demand absolute unanimity would nearly always prevent valid decisions, and every absolute decision about the proportion of majority and minority would have failed to do justice to the changing circumstances. Moreover it was repugnant to the pious mind to imagine the Holy Ghost acting in so numerical a manner.

There existed a declaration of the will of Jesus by which these controversies could have been solved, a declaration which might have been found without difficulty, but the eyes of Christendom were holden, so that it was not recognized. It was not intended that the most important prizes should come to the Church unsought; they were to be acquired only after severest fighting, that they might then be guarded all the more securely. Long, sorrowful experiences led the way back to the will of Jesus which then gradually came to be recognized.

The first stable footing was supplied by the general conviction of Christendom. Now and then Councils were held about whose validity and œcumenical character there was no doubt. Their decision had binding force. A marked example of this is the first Council of Nicæa. But between such reliable Councils, various assemblies of bishops occurred, the defective organization, irregular formation, and rigorous proclamations of which combined to raise serious scruples. These could only be considered valid if they and their decisions became acknowledged, as was sometimes done, by subsequent Councils, to which no

objection could be made, and the decisions of which were indubitable.

But whence came this general conviction, and this freedom from doubt? Again are we considering ideas variable and much contested, and whose very existence was open to debate. The answer is this: Truth, as it spoke in the most inspired prelates and in those men who were least open to worldly influence, truth concerning those contested questions of doctrine and the validity of Councils once more found its support in the See of Rome, the bearer of great Promises. Whatever the Pope, after careful examination and with the consciousness of traditional responsibility favoured, that finally became universal conviction, and could be maintained free of doubt. *Where Rome was, there was the Church.* This principle was gradually evolved, though the successors of Peter did not enforce their opinion with severity. Their influence so acted on the Councils, that the largest and most influential number of prelates decided in their sense. Christendom then could not but feel that in such a decision the Will of God truly appeared.

This course of events which I have depicted was not an innovation, as is generally imputed on the part of the opponents, but a laborious discovery of the way back to the old truth, to the universally known words of Christ who had appointed Peter to be the Rock of the Church. In the course of conflicts, it came to be recognized *that the Rock was indispensable*, that without it the Church could not remain united in the face of

the increasingly difficult conditions, and so one came to understand the Lord's commission in its correct sense, as it had been understood long before by many leading men. Apart from this conception, all obedience and humility towards Jesus Christ remained imperfect.

We willingly grant that even those, who in good faith remained opponents, considering their own opinions right and believing themselves bound to doubt many conciliar decisions, possessed true Humility, but their good faith in themselves was sure to disappear under the weight of authority of the Roman See and its allies, so that, if they still clung to their position, their conduct became an act of rebellion, rather than of Humility.

And so the Church more and more obtained complete liberty of movement, free from the spirit of irresolution. This she won in and through the struggles for the fundamental Christian truths and the true doctrine of Christ. She obtained it by close adherence to the words of the Lord whence it follows that even the head of the Church—the Pope—on whom the position of authority devolved, was not guilty of presumption in exercising his power. He was and is the humble servant of Christ who willingly undertook his duties. Christendom would most decidedly have resisted every one else who dared to assume such leading authority. But before the divine right strengthened by the force of facts, one after another, the individual Churches bowed, and eccle-

siastical science also submitted when it more clearly understood.

A further long struggle was fought in regard to the government of the Church. Though the privileged Papal position, the Primacy, had always been recognized, individual Churches had long possessed a far-reaching independence. But from the general historical development, the propagation of Christianity, and from its relation to the worldly powers there arose more and more the necessity of firmer individual coherence, and a strong supreme directive power, and in this there was no innovation, but only the word of Christ honoured and His intention realized.

Our Lord had said to Peter: "Feed My sheep". These words, the simplicity of which misled many short-sighted people, were firm as a rock. Heaven and earth could pass away but those words could not pass away. Under similar circumstances an earthly founder of religion would have called an assembly of his followers and conferred on one of them the supremacy with great pomp and ceremonial; the Son of God contented Himself with a short speech in the form of a parable. *A gentle wafting with the wonderful flower of His word, and a spiritual monarchy which was to rule the whole world and survive the mightiest States sprang into life.* Are we not reminded of the Creative call: Let there be Light!

It was in a spirit of Humility that the Popes, bearing in view the command of Jesus and being solicitous for the welfare of Christendom, developed their power;

but it would have been presumptuous had they at the same time considered their own honour and worldly advantage. The historian cannot judge of individual cases with any degree of certainty ; that God in heaven alone can do. On the whole we can say that the Papacy has faithfully fulfilled its mission, though, of course, the right limits were not always preserved. Its supremely powerful position does not justify doubting its Humility. On the contrary it was the duty of the Papacy to accept the mission entrusted to it, and thereby prove its obedience.

Matters stood somewhat differently with regard to the bishops, amongst whom a certain opposition against papal supremacy had existed for centuries. In those times, when the Primacy, as it was established through Christ's word, had not yet been defined in clear ecclesiastical pronouncements, the bishops could preserve in all good faith a considerable degree of independence. This good faith in their right rendered their attitude reconcilable with true Humility. But as soon as the papal supremacy was universally acknowledged, opposition to it became sinful, and, if persevered in, it constituted apostasy. In such a case Humility manifestly was denied, for the guilty prelate put his own judgment above that of the Church, and presumed to decide by his own authority a supernatural question, —for the papal primacy is supernatural,—and did so moreover in opposition to the whole body of the Church.

The action of the Greek Church in separating from

the Roman Mother Church was one of sedition, for the doctrine of papal supremacy—the papal primacy—was already fully established and had been repeatedly acknowledged, though in narrow limits, by the Eastern prelates. But in spite of their seditious action, it would be too much to say that they entirely misunderstood the truth.

The Greek Church found sufficient justification—at least apparently—for its secession. Can we suppose that those learned Byzantine theologians had not many reasons to offer? Historically it was quite possible to diminish the importance of the papal preeminence, and at the same time exaggerate that of the other patriarchates, especially of Byzantium. Divergences in teaching might be justified, and traced to apostolic origin. It was also easy to discover faults and encroachments on the part of the clergy in order to prove the necessity of separation. But there is little use in entering into all these arguments hidden away in decisions of Synods, in letters and essays and comparing them with the opposite Roman assertions. There would be no solution to the conflict found and a definite result would never be reached. In order to discover the true circumstances the mental side of the question must be examined by careful investigation of documents. It will then be noticed that *Rome endeavoured to preserve unity and order in the Universal Church*—a purpose which was unattainable except by maintenance and development of the old position. *Constantinople, however, aimed at exalting the patri-*

archal See and placing it side by side with Rome in equality of rights, a procedure which would have brought about a cessation of all supreme directive and teaching authority. On the one hand we perceive fulfilment of duty; on the other ambition; there, deep-rooted Humility in spite of much that is harsh; here, in spite of many truly Christian demonstrations—presumption. He who made such pretensions in opposition to Rome was not even the head of the oldest Church, that of Jerusalem, nor was he the successor of Peter in Antioch, but he was rather the youngest patriarch who owed his rank solely to the intimate connexion with the imperial Court and to worldly power. The fact is significant. Not a divine promise, but external circumstances gave to the chief shepherds of Constantinople the possibility and the opportunity of aspiring to a superior position. *As protectors of Faith and Unity they were quite unnecessary*, but finding circumstances favourable *they sought for* the position of power in which they themselves might protect and unite. They wished to see the lawful occupant of that position, the Chosen one of the Lord degraded. Their ambition was to solve the question of the Primacy—a spiritual question—out of their own knowledge and to their own advantage. Herein lay their presumption. That they appealed to Holy Scriptures, to Conciliar decrees, to the Fathers of the Church and to papal utterances, and advanced many clever arguments was of no consequence. It was always they who conferred upon themselves the right

of elucidation and of decision. Hence as they neither formed nor were intended to form the fundamental Rock of the Church, they cut themselves off from that Rock.

In the struggle between the Oriental and Roman Churches, the dogmatical and historical standpoint even to-day is far too much emphasized. The representatives of both schools of thought, but especially the Greek Orthodox, attempt on the strength of historical research to give what might be called documentary proof of the identity of their doctrine with that of the Apostles. They also try to prove the lawfulness of their conduct at the separation, while each charges the other side with secession. All this may be done, but none need expect to come to a decision by such a road as this. It remains an unfruitful academical dispute, *a law case without a judge.* The goal will only be reached by proceeding by way of principle. It should be remembered first of all that it was the will of Jesus to found a Church which would remain for ever united and which would preserve its store of doctrine free from corruption. For this purpose Jesus evidently thought it necessary to appoint a judge who should be endowed with supernatural gifts, and in point of fact that is what He actually did. The experience of two thousand years has proved that He was right, that without the co-operation of such a judge, discord can neither be prevented nor removed. In that experience the fact, already established on documentary evidence, receives its best corroboration.

We see now that that Church is the true One which has a supreme judge, which stands under the protection of a supreme judge, and, moreover, a humble judge, i.e. one who derives his power from Jesus Christ. In this respect the Roman Church alone can be taken into account, because it possesses an infallible teacher of the faith, and is acknowledged by him. The Greek Orthodox Church, however, relies on the one hand on the dead letter, i.e. on historical sources, out of which learned men who are subject to error continue to expound, establish and defend the faith. On the other hand it relies on assemblies of apostolic successors who are without a leader, and would in consequence be quite irresolute in their decisions, did they not always have a secular protector who confirmed their resolutions. But this secular protector is not a representative of Humility, for his power does not originate sacramentally from Christ. If his co-operation were omitted, it would become apparent, as it did in the first Christian millennium, that assemblies without a head cannot represent a teaching power, and that with learning alone no structure of faith can be preserved intact. The Roman Church likewise relies on sacred documents and writings, but in the last instance always on the infallible, spiritually appointed teacher of Faith, who is a spiritual descendant of Christ. She is a really living organization, capable of developing her structure of doctrine lawfully and in perfect Humility. Her teaching is Christ's teaching, even when it contains more than the words of the Lord and the Apostles,

because the Holy Spirit is at work in her. Whoever thinks that he can argue away the genuineness of this Church, does not thereby prove the genuineness of the Orthodox Church, but simply denies that any Christian Church exists at all.

The establishment of independence in the Greek Church had little influence on the faith, however. Through the veneration of the traditional which prevailed in the East no considerable aberrations took place. Indeed there was hardly any occasion for such, for within the first thousand years, doctrine had so much evolved that much further development was unnecessary. On the whole the separated Church remained in possession of the Christian truth, and at first also in possession of episcopal succession and genuine sacraments. The quiet influence of its neighbour, the Roman Church, increased its inner strength. The people could enjoy heavenly graces even without being in the communion of the true Church, and the validity of their institutions and ritual forms was not contested by Rome.

But yet the separation was reprehensible, because it was the outcome of presumption. This presumption existed long before the separation actually took place. Though the Roman Primacy was not formerly denied in the East, people presumed to judge it in a spirit of independence, pronounce opinions on the lawfulness of its existence and debate its significance. This was already a wrong attitude. The pride which found such an expression *was not born of the Church,*

but of the world. The lofty self-esteem of the East-Roman Emperors, who boasted the title of Emperors of the World, was transmitted to the Church-dignitaries in Byzantium and was used by them in opposition to the Popes. Just as, in their opinion, the new imperial residence was equal to the old, so the Patriarchate of Constantinople was presumed to be equal to that of Rome. In reality everything depended on Church traditions. Such traditions, however, were only searched for after the secession.

Of course the Byzantines brought also other reasons into the field, especially those based on the shortcomings, worldliness of mind and political actions of the Popes. But these were not what decided them. The actual separation occurred just at the time when mighty reforms were being enacted in the Western Churches, as for example that which had its rise in Clugny, and when the truest representatives of the Christian spirit were turning with full decision to the Papacy, communicating to it the purity and fervency of their own minds. Thus it is clear that it was not religious endeavour, but ambition that actuated the decision of separation.

This ambition, this pride must not, however, be ascribed to the persons of the Greek Patriarchs. Had they and the Popes changed places, probably both would have acted in the same way. The circumstances, the whole position of Christendom, made the Byzantine struggle for equality unavoidable. A difficult fundamental question was at stake, and this

question could neither be solved by Rome nor settled by compromise. No yielding, no friendly agreement could, I believe, have prevented the rupture. The solution could and can only be brought about by the experience of a long historical development. It was necessary for the self-willed part of Christendom, which presumed on its old rights, to be isolated for a time. Union may be all the firmer in the future, *when pride has been broken by events of the past.* This future is not yet, but the history of the Church is not counted by centuries but rather by millenniums.

How much the Greek Church is affected with pride, can be seen in the conception of the papal Primacy which is prevalent there. They see only servitude in the submission to Rome, and in separation, liberty. On the other hand, the Roman Catholic feels that just in submission is he united most firmly to Christ.

CHAPTER VI.

TRIUMPHS OF PRESUMPTION.

WITH incomparably greater determination than in the events hitherto described, did the old enemy of mankind, presumption, appear and operate in the so-called Reformations. When the Greek Church seceded, one-half of Christendom severed itself in a body with its doctrines, cult and institutions from the whole community, in order to lead henceforth a separate life. The old well-provisioned ship cast off from the leading Church and attached itself to the State. Legitimate leaders of the Church had deceived themselves as to their own true reasons.

The creations of the Protestant Reformation were, on the contrary, something entirely new, and signified a rupture with the Past. In reprehensible presumption, learned and energetic men dared to formulate a Christianity of their own, convinced that only in this way, could they remove existing serious defects. In considering the separation of the East one must search deeply to detect presumption; here, however, it strikes the eye forcibly at the start.

After the separation from God in olden times, a great number of religions developed. These con-

tained an element of genuine knowledge, but as sinful men could do with them just what they liked, this element very soon became more or less decomposed and enveloped by matter of human creation. This work was not always utterly worthless; it produced much that was right and true, much that the Church confirmed later on in the Christian doctrine. But there could be no certainty, no self-evident validity attached to the store of knowledge created by these religions. None could rely on them. No one could place his hope in them, for the human mind can give no guarantee for spiritual knowledge, and fundamental truths, nor for interpretations and deductions. Presumption alone can attempt such work.

The same position arose after Christ's Death and Ascension. Without superhuman grace nobody could teach the superhuman life and doctrine of our Lord with absolute reliability. *Even the Apostles, being eye-witnesses and having personally heard Him, would have been subject to error.* Even they would have been guilty of presumption had they claimed authority for their pronouncements, and this though they would have made most careful use of all possible means of verification. Their teaching would probably have been truthful in the main points, but absolute certainty would have been wanting to it. Only by being supernaturally commissioned and empowered by the Son of God through the coming of the Holy Ghost, were they able to communicate those supernatural truths to humanity free from any objection. Let it be remembered

that before Pentecost the Apostles altogether abstained from teaching.

Still less would the latter representatives of the new faith have been able to preserve the heritage without supernatural authorization. The doctrines of our Lord most certainly would have deteriorated and dissolved in the stream of time. This would have happened even though the events and utterances had been written down in the beginning, and a strong root thus created from which developments could safely proceed. For even for teaching such as this, supernatural light would have been required.

Moreover in what a variety of ways might not the writings be interpreted, and deductions made from them! Rather than a mighty tree which overshadowed all things, a multitude of shoots and saplings none of which could thrive, would have arisen from the root. Nor would the doctrines themselves have preserved their unconditional validity. The more supernatural matter they contained, the more their substance would have been exposed to doubts and attacks, until at last their most important contents would have been eliminated. *The root itself would have been surrendered to the process of decomposition*, and thereby all the shoots deprived of their vital strength.

We know, however, that Jesus made provision for safeguarding His teaching and His institutions and that He has provided for the growth of the mighty tree. The Apostles and bishops supernaturally united

with Him, and fed by the power of His spirit, were enabled to continue His work. In Humility they fulfilled their task. Those documents too in which the doctrine was propounded, were written under higher inspiration, as was subsequently authoritatively stated by the Church. Throughout Christendom attempts were made at all times to loosen the sacramental connexion. Human pride rebelled against submission to a teaching authority. As at the time of the Gnosis, so frequently at subsequent periods, men of strong mental power arose who in a spirit of self-confidence rested assured that of their own power they could solve spiritual problems. It was this spirit of self-sufficiency which, under special external circumstances, finally caused that great movement—the so-called Reformation.

Every single act of the Reformers was performed on the strength of their own self-determined right. On the field of secular politics it happens now and then that under favourable circumstances a man assumes the Headship of a State by his own right. Such action is called usurpation or appropriation and is considered the foundation of new legal rights. But in the religious world such a procedure is an enormity. Here, whoever acts in his own right, places himself far above the whole human race, not only as teacher, but also as lawgiver of the supernatural, as authoritative proclaimer of truth in the place of God. That is what the leaders of Protestantism dared to do. They were not Church dignitaries; and even those instances in

which they held a teaching office, do not alter the case. For by such an office they were pledged to teach the pure doctrine of the Church, and as soon as they overstepped this, the office ceased. In fact, they did not base their claim on any such office, but on their own intellectual power and on immediate divine revelation. We know how little security either of these present. The human intellect is quite inadequate for supernatural things, and heavenly revelations require valid corroboration if they are to be of value to the human race. Such corroboration, however, is only possible through the incarnate Son of God, who subsequently confirms the proclamations of the prophets and in advance the teaching of His Church. To the pretensions of the Reformers such confirmation has not been vouchsafed.

Now one cannot exactly say that these men actually wished to found new Churches. They rather intended to re-adjust the existing Church to the intentions of Christ, and thus remove her degeneracy. But by this they made bold to perform a work of constitutional and dogmatic import, than which a greater and more difficult cannot be imagined! Far more, indeed a hundred times more, than ever was decreed by the See of Rome or by any Council, was now straightway decreed by the Reformers who had not a vestige of authority in their support. They thereby arrogated to themselves a position far higher than that which any bishop or Pope has ever occupied.

What is the infallibility in the Catholic Church com-

pared with that of Luther? The successor of Peter is bound most severely to present doctrine, and may only enrich it in special cases and with the greatest caution by some single sentence, designed to dissolve existing doubts. What has once been determined remains unalterable for ever. Luther proclaimed his thesis and doctrines with absolute freedom, and demolished and built up according to his momentary opinion.

Now it is argued that the Reformers did not really alter or re-form the Church, or that they did not further develop the existing legal status, which would not have been lawful for them. Their merit lay in disclosing the arbitrary nature of the Church's actions by means of which Christianity had been led to take a wrong turn. This they now rectified. It is further argued that there never existed a Church in the Catholic sense, but only a large number of single communities in which the true word of God, the pure doctrine of Christ, was preached and which were connected with one another only by their common invisible Head. This state of things, it is said, was brought back by the Reformers.

Yes, but which is the true word of God, which the pure doctrine of Christ? Until then the doctrine of the Church and all the doctrines advocated by her had on very good grounds been considered part of it. How were the innovators entitled to cut off or prune away all this? What right had they to assume the previous development to be at an end just where it

pleased them and to attempt building on its foundation a new superstructure?

All these were again supernatural questions which had to be dealt with, and they could not be solved by the human intellect alone. From where did the Reformers receive their supernatural knowledge?

The usual answer is: The Bible is the true Word of God, in it stands everything which may be taught in Christendom. Is it not, however, absolutely arbitrary to pronounce one single source of revelation to be the only authoritative one, whilst until then other sources had had equal authority? It is also quite impossible to interpret the Holy Scriptures conclusively without supernatural assistance and without a supernaturally enlightened teaching Power. That is evident by the great variety of interpretations. In the long conciliar struggles concerning the fundamental doctrines of faith every one of those implicated had also felt bound to the Bible, and yet how far divergent were the opinions! Far greater still were the divergences among the Reformers themselves and among their successors, despite the fact that in unusually difficult questions (with singular effrontery) they relied on the results of the ancient councils. In doing this they really placed their reliance in the ancient Church, whose very right of existence they disputed! Without the thorough work of Church and Papacy they would have been altogether unable to draw up their "pure doctrine". They had to thank those powers for their whole Christology.

Of course many explanations have been furnished to justify the procedure of the Reformers. It is said that they only repudiated the arbitrary behaviour of the Pope and wished to acknowledge the Church as it appeared in the Councils of Constance and Bâle, but being expelled from the Church and excommunicated they were forced to proceed on their own separate paths. It is said, again, that they only rejected what was in opposition to the Bible, but did not confine themselves to the Bible as the only source. These excuses are, however, so artificial and include so many obscurities, that they are quite untenable. After all, it was always the innovators who decided what was to be accepted and what not, and how everything was to be conceived, interpreted and understood. By their self-assumed absolute power they threw into confusion the most carefully regulated, though in some important points, still undetermined doctrine.

No, the Reformers had no authority or capability whatever to transform, to purify or to abolish the Church and put something else in her place, if they meant the new production to proclaim genuine, supernatural truth. Whatever they did in this connection, in whatsoever manner and with whatever means they did it, it always was an unauthorized interference with the supernatural. Whatever material they took for their new structure, whether from pagan philosophy, or from Christian doctrine, apostolic or conciliar or papal decrees, revealed or scientific facts, whether they used much or little of the dogmas of the old

Church, *that structure was always their work, and their spirit dwelt in it.* Not even the Bible, not even the Apostolic Creed retained their supernatural value, for they were withdrawn from the authoritative interpretation of the Church and subjected to an arbitrary use. To present such a work to Humanity, or worse still, force it on mankind as an object of faith, as a law of life, as an anchor of hope for time and eternity was, however pious and pleasing it might look, however beautiful its doctrine might be—deification of one's own human spirit and the height of presumption.

All the same the Reformers were of course quite at liberty to assert their personal opinion scientifically, so to say, and to communicate it to others, in the first place in the negative sense.

The believing Catholic declares the Church to be divine, because he has become supernaturally convinced of it, because he feels blessed by her gifts of grace, because all her doctrines appear in the highest degree reasonable to him, because in all and everything there reigns a wonderful and otherwise inexplicable harmony, and because she can bear the strictest scientific investigation. From a correct comprehension of her divinity results the willing acceptance of the whole structure of faith, including those parts which are not matter for discussion.

The Reformers could deny all this. They might assert that they never attained to a supernatural conviction and never felt any blessedness. They might attack Church doctrines, deny their harmony and raise

a thousand objections. Who could forbid them? People cannot be forced to accept the truth! And if they as individuals thus rejected Christianity for their own person and stepped back to some pagan standpoint, they would not expect to be praised for their Humility, nor could they rightly be reproached with presumption. In that case they simply had not the faculty to believe. We may even say that their standpoint would have been to some extent intelligible at that time, because in many respects actual evils were apparent in the Church whereby doubts in her divinity were positively challenged. *But these men had no right to proclaim this negative opinion as authoritative for the world and as a supernatural fact.* That was enormous presumption.

The innovators could, however, also say much in the affirmative sense. They could proclaim the principle of free research. Such was tenable and might, rightly understood, be approved, by believing Catholics as well. Relying on it, they could form such an idea of Jesus and His relation to God, as they liked. They could construct a doctrinal system in their opinion conformable with the thoughts of Jesus and the existing sources. So far so good. They could enlist followers, gather them into a communion, and with them worship God according to the decreed doctrines. Why not? That was far better than being absorbed solely in worldly endeavours. But under no circumstances ought they to have presented these, their own opinions, teachings and institutions as the only valid

ones! They ought not to have posed as founders of Religion, as originators and restorers of the One true supernatural faith, and they ought not to have condemned as heretics those who thought otherwise, whether they followed further new teachings, or remained true to the old Church. Again such was an unauthorized interference with the Supernatural, and therefore an act of presumption.

Protestantism is nothing but a Philosophy of Religion, which has accepted and included in its structure more or less Christian doctrine. Protestantism contains much that is correct, but can give no guarantee of this correctness. Every one may with perfect liberty examine its tenets, and accept or refuse them, just as some scientific proposition delivered from the lecturer's desk may be accepted or refused. But all this can have nothing whatever to do with the salvation of the soul, because such teachings lack all supernatural authority.

Such is therefore the true position of those creeds which grew out of the Reformation, and the whole of their immense display of learning cannot raise them to a different one. Nevertheless Protestants belong to the flock, and to the communion of Christ according to the Will of our Lord and are entitled therefore to call themselves Christians. Though they themselves naturally assert this, their statement is not conclusive, for they are not capable of uttering with certainty a spiritual decision. The Catholic Church has, however, acknowledged their right to the Christian name,

and thus the question has been decided. This acknowledgment was given about a thousand years before the Protestant communities were established, at that time when the validity or invalidity of the baptism of heretics was discussed, and when, chiefly through the powerful advocacy of Rome, the validity of their baptism was finally recognized. The will of Christ as expressed in this acknowledgment is the legal title by which Protestants who are validly baptized can claim to be members of the Christian communion. This will of Christ is surely justified, because these separated ones, if they are really pious, are connected much more intimately with the Catholic Church than they themselves know. What they earnestly and firmly believe, what they hold as the foundation of their faith, is after all only what the Catholic Church also teaches, and has been believed in the Christian Church from the beginning. The differentiating doctrines have only a scientific significance for them and are only of academic value; they have nothing to do with the life of faith. But people are ignorant of this because they do not know the Catholic Church. They fancy that many doctrines which Protestants share with Catholics are exclusively "evangelical". I have repeatedly noticed that the hatred of pious Protestants for the Catholic Church arises from the opinion that they might be deprived of certain beautiful doctrines which, as a matter of fact, are absolutely Catholic. It is a sad misconception.

The Reformers cannot possibly be acquitted of presumption though the motives which prompted their work may have been sincere and religious. They claimed for their own supernatural teaching unconditional validity for all mankind, and that surely was presumption.

To this assertion, however, the Protestant communities did not continue to hold fast. To-day the liberal Protestant party favours the doctrine of evolution. It says that doctrines of faith have only a temporal value and bind only the actually living generation, that they must of necessity suffer changes in the vicissitudes of time and circumstances and through the advancement of universal knowledge; that there is therefore no unconditional, absolute, *but only a conditional relative Religion.* Thus the universal validity and authority of the tenets of faith is actually abandoned, and one might be tempted to ascribe modesty and humility to the representatives of this party.

Yes, one might do so. But first of all, *this* Humility bears no fruit. If these liberal Protestants are right, there exists absolutely no supernatural truth from which men may draw comfort in the afflictions of life, or in which they may find any moral support. That which I accept only conditionally and which is subject to continual shifting, is not faith. And again, the assertion that there can be no firm knowledge in spiritual things, is at once a judgment about such supernatural subjects, and if such a judgment claims authority, it is the fruit of presumption, for these questions are beyond

the reach of human intelligence. Most of all do the representatives of these opinions repudiate the Catholic Church with her firm structure of faith and oppose her in the most improper fashion; a fact which shows at once that they quite lack Humility. They approve of their own teaching exclusively and say that whoever rejects it, or professes an unchangeable religion is either a fool or a hypocrite.

Humility is the sign of the true Church and of the true religious Community. This does not necessarily mean that that Church contains the greatest number of humble people. Who could acquire such knowledge! Outward behaviour is deceptive, and the inmost heart is but rarely revealed. In the Protestant congregations there are doubtless very many humble people, especially in those who abide by the teaching of their founders and do not continually devise new improvements. *The true Church is rather that One, where Humility is one of the conditions of existence*, that Church which neither could nor would have existed without it.

Such is the case only in the Catholic Church. Her structure of doctrine is the only one that has developed in constant willing submission. Jesus the Son of God bowed before the heavenly Father, and the Apostles bowed before Jesus. The administrators of the teaching office, the bishops, Councils and Popes, submitted themselves in Humility to the doctrine of faith as proclaimed by their predecessors and the Apostles, and they undertook the work of interpretation and elucidation which was suitable and necessary

in the knowledge that a humble acceptance of their commission alone gave them their authority to do so. The whole structure of faith would have fallen to pieces immediately if the workmen became deficient in Humility, or worked according to their own ideas. Arbitrary additions were absolutely inadmissible.

The Protestant communities require for their existence not Humility but pride and presumption. These are indispensable. Had they submitted to the established lawful teaching power, their existence would no longer have been justified, and they would have ceased to be.

If on the contrary the founders desired to raise a new structure, they were obliged to assume a teaching power of their own, and in so doing they became guilty of presumption. Nor did it matter *from where they took their material*, whether from the Christian or Pagan-philosophical world, provided always that they considered that their own decrees constituted a universally valid religion.

If the latter claim is not made, and if Protestantism considers itself only as a Science, it is then in no way entitled to rank as supernatural, and must withdraw from the field. Its adherents are then in no other position than that of the learned Greeks and Romans who turned from the popular belief and tried to fill the void with disquisitions on the future life, which, though learned, lacked solid foundation. In principle it matters not that in the present case Christian material is used. If Protestantism still attempts to

speak on matters spiritual, and dares even to dispute as with authority the intrinsic substance of truth in the real religion, then it manifests again undisguised presumption.

In all modes of thought which have differed from the Catholic Church, at the root of their nature we find this failing. In none of them can Christian truth therefore be represented. *The One True Religion is to be found only in the holy Catholic Church. She represents the genuine Ring of the Parable. Its distinctive mark is Humility.*

CHAPTER VII.

RESULTS AND DEDUCTIONS.

In all our reflections hitherto we have followed up the traces of the History of Salvation from their beginnings. At first and in a preliminary way we accepted as correct the ancient Christian teachings which refer to this method of salvation. We then saw that subsequent events always served to confirm preceding ones, and were again in turn supported by later utterances. We found that faith was always reinforced by Humility. Finally we came to our own time and our own mental relationship to Holy Church. Now that we can survey the position of all events and ideas and their dependence on one another, it may be useful and necessary for perfect clearness to view again the whole range of our reflections in their right proportion and in correct sequence as a believing Catholic sees them from his standpoint.

Man in a state of nature stands as a perfect stranger in the presence of the supernatural world. However earnestly he may endeavour to obtain knowledge of it by his own intellectual powers that he may live in harmony with it, he will always labour in vain, for he can receive no guarantee of the truth of what he finds.

Only by supernatural means can he become connected with the supernatural and understand the mysteries of the supernatural world without any doubt.

To explain how this is done, some may be inclined to commence with Holy Baptism, propound the power of its Grace and then proceed from one Sacrament to the other, just as is done in catechisms of Christian doctrine. But for our inquiry such a method would be quite unsuitable. We do not ask how and by what means, and in what way faith is planted in the hearts of men by God, for this is a supernatural question which the Church must answer. We wish rather to ascertain how man, the natural man, finds the connection with the supernatural world and how he becomes conscious of it. We take our start not from God, but from man, i.e. from ourselves, from that standpoint where alone we are really at home.

The first primary condition for obtaining truth is to come near to the Catholic Church, occupy oneself with her teaching, obey her precepts. A Catholic is taught all this from youth. An outsider can be led to it by various circumstances, especially by mental dissatisfaction, and then at the right moment baptism or conversion will be the means of his reception into the communion of the Church. In both cases, increased intimacy and knowledge and consequent moral life develop faith in the divinity of the Church and the truth of her doctrine. In the eyes of such a man she becomes the infallible messenger of supernatural

truth, though he may not at first recognize the final cause of this change, and his new-born faith. But the Church which is now his authority teaches him how it has happened. She explains to him the effect of the Sacrament of Baptism and the work of God in the soul by which natural man is joined to the supernatural world by a firm faith, as he himself has experienced. The procedure is precisely the same as we have seen in Peter in relation to the Divinity of Jesus.

Herewith the foundation for all further knowledge is given. In connexion with faith and supported by the Church's customs true Christian Humility develops, which again creates the correct conception of the Church's Past. And so the searcher for truth understands clearly the gradual process of development right up to the Apostles, from whose infallibility that of the Church has sprung. The supernatural value of the holy writings of the New Testament stands before his eyes as an inviolable fact. He understands that all these, the teaching Church, the Evangelists and the Apostles owe their infallibility to the operation of the Holy Ghost. The kernel and chief substance of the whole teaching is Jesus Christ the Son of God who in Humility descended upon the earth. By this teaching His divinity becomes absolutely certain, and the significance of His life and Passion are understood. The believing scientist may prosecute most minute investigations but he will find that the representations of the Church and of Holy Scripture coincide with those facts which he can ascertain, and that what has been

realized by faith, can sustain the most stringent scientific investigations. Especially will his conviction be strengthened by the invulnerable and fully verifiable fact of the Resurrection. Like the Apostles he will see in it a perfectly regular, lawful event, by which alone the martyr's death of the God-man can be explained and justified.

In this way the Catholic investigator, always proceeding from his own personal point of view, has, by the mediation of the Church to whom he has humbly submitted, reached the centre of the Christian Faith.

From here, from Jesus Christ, the rays of eternal truth penetrate on every side in order to verify the supernatural knowledge of succeeding as well as preceding periods. Relying on our Lord, the Christian can now also acknowledge as authoritative the supernatural manifestations of the Old Covenant which appear in the Scriptures—in the books of prophecy, poetry and law. The whole history of salvation right up to the beginnings of the human race and the Creation, is true to the believer inasmuch as it converges on Christ; and this conviction remains unshaken whatever be the results to which a careful strictly honest secular Science may attain in this field and within its legitimate scope.

Just as we can trace back to the Creation the knowledge of divine things, so we can follow Humility step by step from the believers of to-day right up to Jesus Christ, who has restored this sublime virtue to humanity.

In a certain sense we can even trace Humility to its first seeds which began to bud in the old Covenant in prospect of the coming Redeemer. Even the prophets subjected their supernatural knowledge to a future confirmation predicted to be given by the promised Messiah.

Now very many men will not only *not* take the way indicated to the sure possession of truth, but they also represent it as incorrect and unable to be traversed. Doubtless a multitude of counter-arguments can be found, many objections can be raised whose successful refutation is difficult in proportion to the degree of opposition which such adversaries raise against the moral demands of Christianity. How sharp will be the objection to the Divinity of the Church by those who know her only through biassed representations! The whole flood of calumny and of true and false stories taken from her long career, will be hurled against her in order to prove how preposterous is the assertion of her divinity. Those people forget, however, that divinity has never been ascribed to the sinful members of the Church or to all her institutions and societies.

Similarly, doubts will be thrown on the lawful episcopal succession, on the Lord's commission to teach in its application to post-apostolic times, on much, if not all, that is miraculous in the life of Jesus; many will even deny the divine Sonship of the Redeemer. It is quite possible to attack at every point in the endeavour to overthrow and destroy the sublime structure by scholarly research which, while ap-

pearing most scrupulous, cannot dispense all the same with certain presuppositions. Even the most convincing justification would not always prevent new attacks. *Just because secular Science is never able to reach positive results on questions concerning the supernatural, therefore it cannot become convinced of its previous error by subsequently finding the truth.*

As often as its declarations are proved fallacious, secular Science will always attempt new solutions and advance new results as truth in opposition to ecclesiastical doctrine.

Though we find it impossible to convince all men, particularly the unwilling, of the correctness of the way set forth, and which leads to the divine store of knowledge, one thing we can assert with fullest assurance; no other way can be found but this one. If this is wrong, then none exists. People may reject the Catholic system or advance a thousand arguments against it, but they will find it difficult to discover another nearly so logical, or one which would not be proved useless by the slightest test. The Catholic edifice of faith is something so remarkable in its symbolical structure and solidity which has resisted the fiercest attacks, *that even as a mark of purely human intellectual activity, without a real substance of truth, it could be none other than miraculous.*

Many may consider its position to be untenable, yet it is a fact that beside it other structures are of no account.

Those who wish to acquire the faith by the Protest-

ant way, are met by insurmountable difficulties at the first step. They may be inclined to rely on firm spiritual guidance, but they see at once a great number of Churches, out of which they are asked to choose. *Their attitude of Humility is rejected and presumption demanded from them instead.* They are asked to decide a supernatural question.

It might be said that turning to the Catholic Church also involves definite choice out of many existing Churches and therefore making a decision in supernatural things. *But that is a mistake. With regard to the Catholic Church independent choice is needless, all that is required is the serious longing for salvation.* Whoever is seeking salvation with an humble and contrite heart, will be led by any and every road, even through the other religious communities, to the true fount of salvation, provided that at least some true knowledge of the latter comes to him. Only here will he find ultimate content. The reverse road is impossible. To choose the Protestant Church must always be deliberate, unless a person belongs to it by birth. It is out of the question for anyone to enter the Catholic Church and then by logical development of the Catholic faith arrive at one of the Protestant Churches; these can only be entered deliberately or by secession, i.e. by denial of the Catholic faith.

Now let us suppose a searcher for truth has chosen the Protestant Church, how is he to obtain conviction of its divinity? It is surely not feasible to ascribe divinity to the totality of the Protestant Churches, to

Protestantism in general. It includes far too many contrasts and contradictions which are unthinkable in an organization of divine origin. There can be no question of such a sublime quality except for a community firmly knit together with the bands of unity. The simplicity of Protestantism in its external appearance and the limitation of its extension does not necessarily preclude divine nature, but neither does it make such origin probable. Is it likely that the mighty tree overshadowing the earth, which was to grow out of the mustard seed and which this separate Church pretends to represent, should have made so little progress in two thousand years; that that tree should still lack the dazzling splendour of its bloom and wonderful external development, and should moreover have only begun to grow up properly four centuries ago, and until then shown only insignificant shoots?

What does such a Church offer to justify the conviction of its divinity? Abundance of teaching, but no Grace. These teachings give, so to say, a note of credit for those Graces, but every believer has to obtain them for himself without an intermediary, direct from God. Even the Lord's Supper is not a Grace dispensed by the Church as the bearer of higher powers. To conceive it as such would bring only disappointment. It affords but the opportunity and stimulant to obtain by devout prayer gifts of Grace from the Most High. Hence the Protestant Church offers through its clergy, who call themselves "ministers of the Holy Word," nothing but teaching and doctrine.

These doctrines might be of divine origin, and thereby attest the supernatural nature of the Church which proclaims them. The searcher for truth might obtain conviction of this nature by their richness, and sublimity. But to this end the doctrines in the first place would have to be established quite firmly and be in agreement with one another. And that is just what they are not. They diverge in all directions, and even to the symbolic books absolute authority is not ascribed. It is left to the believer which line of thought he will adopt. Doctrine, too, remains subject to his personal judgment. *Once again is Humility rejected and presumption demanded.* Were he required under these circumstances to believe in the divinity of the chosen Church, he would at the same time be compelled to deify his own intellect, on which after all everything depends. This, however, nobody will feel inclined to do who honestly seeks truth outside of his own self.

We have seen that in Protestantism it is impossible to take even the first step necessary for obtaining supernatural truth. There is no secure starting point. Therefore the searcher is referred to heavenly inspirations procured by zealous prayer, and to scientific research. Neither of these can help him. The inspirations either do not come or are so indistinct that their reliable interpretation is impossible. A Christian of clear mind and modest heart will be reluctant to build far-reaching conclusions on such inner experiences. Nor can he secure anything reliable in the supernatural sphere by way of Science or help derived

from Holy Scripture and other sources. Who that is not himself a theologian can dare to enter this maze of diverse opinion? To establish anything with authority on one's own power is, as we know, utterly impossible; it is even more so when there is no certain supernatural foundation. The two suggestions to obtain supernatural knowledge by one's own prayer and by scientific research amount to a demand to manifest presumption.

There are, all the same, many Protestants who will not be deterred, and who, filled with pride, consider themselves quite able to formulate an authoritative religion for themselves out of the Bible. But how immature are the fruits of these individual inclinations and endeavours. They are mostly far, very far removed from heavenly truth.

These people move preferably in the domain of liberal theology, they care no longer for the historical foundation of Christianity, but only for ideas which they find in it, and which they shape almost entirely to their fancy. In their work the person of Christ meets with but slight consideration. Whether the thoughts originate from Christ or from some philosopher, or whether they have developed automatically in the minds of the people does not alter their value. The authority for the truth of these thoughts is not their author, but solely that which they contain or rather the investigator who declares these contents acceptable, and the scholar only declares acceptable what he has first shaped and interpreted according to his views.

Therefore the entire liberal doctrine is nothing but that of some particular scholar put into a Christian form, retaining the Christian name and outward appearance only, out of consideration for the popular tradition.

In spite of all this Protestants can arrive at a secure knowledge of supernatural truths and acquire a firm belief in them. How is that done? They cannot recognize their Church as that Power of God which infallibly leads to the truth. Their Church, however, does possess a group of doctrines which originate from Catholicism and therefore contain genuine supernatural knowledge. In the humble seeker, in him who longs for salvation, but who knows not the true Church, God can well awaken a supernatural conviction of the heavenly origin of these fundamental doctrines, so that he is not only conscious of inward blessedness by the treasure of faith he has gained, but also becomes enabled to move profitably in the supernatural sphere. This condition can be compared to the position of those Israelites who did not come into direct contact with Christ, and yet by their longing for salvation reached certain lower degrees of faith. The knowledge of a Protestant likewise remains always incomplete. The desire to develop and elucidate it must necessarily lead to constant aberrations because there is no teaching authority. Each will build up a different structure round the established centre. Fortunately there is at least something on which he can rely and this something is not a mean possession, because the divinity of Christ is part of it.

All this may be said, though in a higher degree, of the Greek Orthodox Church.

It is, however, a mistake for people to think that they do right to acquiesce in such an incomplete state. Such acquiescence is a sign of decreasing religious power. The watchword must ever be: *Forward to the Faith and in the Faith.* He who has received by supernatural means the truths of religion, stands practically on Catholic ground. He has in Humility submitted to higher wisdom and thereby made himself worthy of divine blessing. His thinking and feeling is no longer in harmony with the spirit of Protestantism in which presumption is inherent, and he cannot fail to recognize this if he is a zealous Christian. The cold, purely intellectual Church service must strongly impress him with its own inadequateness to attain to the holiness and sublimity of Jesus as he has come to understand Him. And doubtless there are numerous pious Protestants, who are no longer contented and pleased with their Church. They strive in their innermost hearts for something higher and holier, which, however, they cannot find because they are accustomed from their youth to look upon the Catholic Church as pernicious. In a serious search for salvation this prejudice will be conquered. If this is done, the Church hitherto so much detested, will be recognized as the divine messenger, not only of those doctrines about whose truth they are already enlightened, but of a whole faultless and unerring doctrinal edifice. Then they will also find in her the splendour of

all the heavenly graces which Protestantism cannot offer.

The whole development of the history of salvation and the manner in which Christians are brought to understand it makes it evident that the Catholic Church came from and leads to Humility, whilst every one of the Protestant Churches owes its existence to presumption, and demands the same of its members.

This judgment is a truly scientific conclusion, one of course already long established, but which I desire to draw out here in a specific manner. It proceeds from the supposition that a religion which is true exists, and that this true religion can be found in Christianity alone ; my conclusion therefore is directed particularly against those who either assert a plurality of true religions or who believe that they see the pure truth in another Church or line of thought other than that of the Roman Catholics.

Of course my suppositions will be contested by many, especially by the majority of liberal theologians and their adherents. Their objections cannot be properly refuted in a few pages. Nevertheless I shall have shown the manner in which the Catholic faith proves its unconditional truth, and how the fact of the history of salvation has been attested. These proofs show both supernatural and natural features. Their power is absolute and binds through all time every one to whom higher inspiration has revealed the divinity of the Church. The eyes of such an one are opened for the supernatural side of the question. And,

moreover, his spiritual conviction becomes confirmed by the results of widespread secular investigation, which though not of absolute and unconditional value in themselves, yet can be considered well founded. These results the unbeliever might acknowledge, if only he takes an impartial view of the situation. Not possessing Christian faith, as a rule he will not do so; although even without faith scientific recognition is possible. *But the unbeliever has another kind of faith concerning the supernatural,* a faith which, being without proof, can only be called prejudice. Unbelievers authoritatively declare that no supernatural influence is exercised in the world, and that no true religion can exist. From this absolutely unjustified standpoint it is of course impossible either to understand or approve the Christian History of Faith.

Now we ask: Has the scientist who is a true believer, a right to deal with this history of salvation which contains so much supernatural matter, not only as an object and result of his scientific research, but also as an indubitably established fact? My answer is that if his conviction of its truth is unassailable, he is absolutely obliged to deal with it in that way. He would be untruthful if he taught other than that which he himself thinks. If some event becomes known to him in a supernatural manner as being true beyond any doubt, he must not represent that event as subject to doubt. Such would be an untruth. It might be said: his judgment is a purely personal conviction which cannot be communicated to others who have

not received such supernatural confirmation; therefore it is neither generally authoritative nor binding for all men. But that is a wrong idea. Not only a single scientist but every other investigator can obtain the same conviction by pursuing the same path. If he does not follow it and in consequence does not reach the light, he must blame himself. It must be recognized that *there are other means of obtaining knowledge than the customary historical sources:* a moral life and an humble mind are such. True Science cannot wait for those whose worldly mind shrinks from using these means; they must be left behind.

There exists a *Catholic Science*, a Science, distinct from the non-Catholic by the perfection of the means by which it works, and by the more plenteous and more perfect results it is able to obtain. This Science as it has generally been pursued in Christendom for centuries and is still cultivated in the Catholic world, must again be given a position of honour and carefully developed.

We have now been led to conclude that the Catholic faith represents true Christianity, that therefore, supposing Christianity contains the supernatural Truth, Catholicism must be considered as the One True Religion. Doubtless this conclusion is of great importance for modern history, filled as it is with denominational conflicts, but it would be quite wrong to say that Catholics are always right, Protestants always wrong. Such an opinion should only be uttered with the greatest care because serious mistakes may be

made. But the fact that one religious party is in possession of truth, is a most important and weighty circumstance, influencing the interpretation of events and actions, and most worthy of consideration in connection with the motives of leading persons. Perhaps much that was supposed to have been actuated by worldly inclinations and desires, must be ascribed to the motive power of truth, and a multitude of facts and things will have a fresh light thrown upon them. But partiality must not arise. Though the investigator possesses the higher knowledge that only one side has taken hold of the true faith, yet he stands none the less above the contending parties.

On some other occasion it may be explained in detail what method of research Catholic Science ought to adopt and a practical test of that method may also be given.

PART II.

HUMILITY IN THE INSTITUTION FOR SALVATION (HELLSANSTALT).

CHAPTER VIII.

THE HUMILITY OF JESUS.

THE whole process of foundation and maintenance of the Church was a conflict between Humility and Pride; in it pride was being overcome continually—as it had entered the human race in the train of freedom of will—by that sublime virtue which God has given us. The victory was gained, but it was gained only in the holy Catholic Church, in that immediate work of the God-man who in Humility bowed to the Father. Whoever gave way to the old enemy, pride, tended to separate himself from the communion which should protect him, and whoever separated himself was exposed to the enemy's redoubled attacks, without being able properly to resist him. Thus did Humility operate in the history of salvation and help to realize the divine plan of salvation. Our task is now to contemplate its manifestations in that Church, in that institution for salvation which has gradually arisen before our eyes in the preceding long disquisitions, in that Church that has been established to keep secure the treasure. So far we have contemplated the conquests and the defeats which

Humility has made on earth; we will now consider it in its activity as a sovereign.

Jesus Christ and the Church are One. All the noble forces that are at work in the Church also operated in the God-man when He lived on earth, and they are now operating in the same manner in which they worked in Him. Jesus is the prototype of the Church and her example. His Life explains those proceedings in the Church that correspond with her nature, and in following His activity the Church necessarily formulates her own. If therefore we wish to understand correctly how Humility appears and works in the Church, we must first find out how it was displayed in the life of Jesus. In this way alone is it possible successfully to refute the numerous erroneous and distorted views again and again expressed and propagated by adversaries of the Faith. In the Most Holy Trinity God the Father and God the Son are united in Unity of Being. There is no subordination and therefore no tendency to mutual subjection. Hence we cannot speak of Humility here. Out of the Love of the Triune God the united resolution arose according to which God the Son was born as man. He took upon Himself our human nature and was clothed with it in order to save the human race. In this human nature He was both capable and willing to submit Himself and subordinate His will to His Heavenly Father. In His human nature therefore Humility existed. The united loving desire of the Triune God empowered the Son by an act of omnipotence to assume and manifest

this virtue and so to restore it to humanity. Jesus presented to mortal man an example of the most perfect Humility by submitting His adopted human will to that of God. And this Humility appeared most strikingly and decisively before their eyes through the fact that the incarnate Son, in spite of His perceptible divine nature, accommodated Himself to the position and willingly accepted all the duties of a creature. The fact that He placed Himself high above men as their spiritual king and as teacher of the One True Religion did not detract from their conception of His true Humility, for even those sublime positions were for Him a deep humiliation.

We must not lose sight of the fact that no demonstrations of Humility over and above the required measure were made. Jesus was to manifest purest Humility to men in order to vanquish the pride which ruled them. To this end it was quite sufficient that the fact of the incarnation and the full obedience of Jesus to the Father was understood and apprehended by the faithful. In no grander manner could that virtue be manifested. It would have been weakness bordering on hypocrisy had our Lord in addition made use of the manifestations of Humility common to people of low rank. Such behaviour would unnecessarily have impeded faith in His divinity and so obscured His most pathetic and impressive manifestation of Humility. Therefore Jesus did not do so. Though He did not shrink from any humiliation in a human sense if it were demanded of Him for a special purpose,

yet the idea cannot be entertained with regard to Him that He would stoop to perform any action, merely for the sake of making Himself appear humble. He always behaved as One exalted, and since His public appearance as the Master and Messiah, and for those of clearer insight as God.

The decisive manifestation of Humility on the part of Jesus was, as we have seen, His submission to the will of the Father and His obedience to Him. All else was in fulfilment of this will and in manifestation of this obedience and naturally included much that would have been most repugnant to ordinary men. Thus Jesus taught not how to acquire the reputation of Humility, but how in true Humility of mind to be ready for any sacrifice that may be required, especially that of external honours which should never be considered if they come into conflict with duties and tasks once accepted.

The various commands which Jesus had to fulfil were all directed to the same end—the salvation of mankind. A single action often fulfilled several commands by serving several purposes, and we are able to trace such variety of purpose in the unity of action. Jesus was *to lead a model human life* such as no mortal had led before, a life morally perfect, constituting an example to which all His followers could conform their own lives in spite of the variety and difference of circumstances. To this task Jesus gave by far the greatest part of His earthly life. According to the latest researches the period devoted to His family

and His private life seems to have been thirty-three-and a third years, from December, 748, to April, 782, A.U.C., followed by His public activity as Messiah. During these preparatory years He had plenty of opportunity to prove His worth in every way, in filial love to His parents, in the acquisition of required knowledge, in fulfilment of ritual duties, in intercourse with His surroundings, and in labouring for the daily bread. In the lowly simple circumstances in which His birth had placed Him, the duties of obedience and attending to others fell at all times to His lot, so that the contrast between His divine sublimity and His earthly life became sufficiently prominent to those who were aware of His supernatural origin or became convinced of it later on.

But in all this He did not lower Himself that he might appear humble, or manifest a disposition for self-abasement, but solely that He might give an example of dutifulness. It was the Father who had decreed the degree of abasement to which Jesus as a man was to descend, and this by placing Him in circumstances which produced the needful prominent contrast. This was done out of regard for the shortsightedness of men. Jesus only did in this respect what He demanded afterwards of each of His followers : He accommodated Himself willingly to His allotted position, and showed in the very perfection with which He complied with His earthly duties, His immaculate Divine nature. Had Christ been born in a King's Palace, His humiliation would not have been less. It

lay in His willing obedience, not in the human tasks which fell to Him on earth, because in the sight of God these are all of equal value. The manner of fulfilment alone regulates the value of men's actions in the eyes of God.

Christ's life as our model continued throughout the whole of His active missionary career and passion. Here, however, it deviated considerably from that of the preparatory period by reason of His other messianic duties. As far as possible our Lord acquiesced in the obligations which His position as Son, Citizen and faithful Israelite involved, but His sublime position as a messenger of new truths was bound to lift Him high above them. Out of this resulted the conflict which ended His earthly life, a conflict which could never have arisen from His life as model alone.

A further activity on the part of Jesus in accordance with the Father's will was that of *proclaiming the new Law* or rather authoritatively interpreting and supplementing the existing law. In this He appeared as a teacher striving to educate by His preaching, and effect virtuousness of life by His words. As such He could exhort His hearers to Humility without being Himself obliged to manifest His humbleness in that precise manner to which He counselled them. What He prescribed were chiefly exercises of Humility which were to serve the increase of humble-mindedness. Such exercises were needless for Him, who owned this virtue supernaturally and had given transcendent proof of it; it was also needless for Him to give con-

tinual example of it for His word was enough for those of good will. Only when other considerations gave Him an opportunity to act in obedience to His own precepts did our Lord submit Himself to acts of lowliness.

A convincing example of this is the washing of feet before the Paschal meal, which must by no means be conceived as an exercise of Humility but was part of an important liturgical act.

The result of the third task was just the reverse of exercises of Humility. *Jesus had to manifest Himself to humanity*, not only as the promised Messiah, but also *as the Son of the Most High, as true God.* Here the most extreme contrasts met, the hostile forces, Humility and Pride, stood opposed in closest contest. If His claim was justified by facts, then Jesus was the prototype of Humility, He was God willingly descended from His throne, no matter what rank He chose for Himself on earth. If His claim was false, then He appeared as the prototype of Pride, as a demented man who strove to put himself on an equality with the Most High, however deeply He might bow before His fellowmen. It was then and is now utterly impossible to reconcile these contrasts. Either one acknowledges Jesus Christ as what He asserted Himself to be and then highest reverence and adoration are due to Him, or one refuses to believe in Him, and then He must either be pitied as a madman or condemned as a criminal. Our Lord was able to delay the actual decision of the people, who could not yet bear the full

truth by presenting Himself to them as the Prophet promised by Moses, as the Son of man, or of David, or as the Messiah sent from God. But in the end the conflict had to reach a climax. As an exemplary of haughtiness and as a blasphemer, He the prototype of Humility, the Son of God, fell a victim to His enemies who were devoid of faith.

In fulfilling this task, Jesus bore glorious witness to His own Humility, though expressions of Humility in the human sense were almost entirely absent. He appeared infinitely exalted above His whole surroundings, above all humanity as soon as He spoke of His position, and of His nature in such words as "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life," or "he that seeth Me, seeth the Father also," or "before Abraham was, I am". With such utterances He could not set an example, because never could mortal man speak like that. He could inspire Humility only in view of the deep humiliation expressed in His incarnation, provided that men were capable of understanding this supernatural event.

Also in the miracles which He performed and whose grandeur continually increased, Humility was not recognizable but only power and sublimity. Though He used His supernatural ability to serve men and to assuage their sufferings, yet the real purpose of His miraculous deeds was to provide a visible confirmation of His words and of His declarations concerning His person. And again and again did He use those opportunities to claim a power

which appertained to God alone: the right to forgive sins. To awaken faith in this power was the purpose of His visible miraculous deeds.

Another duty of Jesus in connection with the proclamation of His divinity was the obligation *to fulfil the Old Testament prophecies*, for that was to the contemporary Israelites and in equal degree to those of later times the strongest testimony of His Messiahship, and thereby of His Sonship which He taught in His position as Messiah. Herein was Humility expressed because the fulfilment of the prophecies was synonymous with the fulfilment of the Father's will. This will, hitherto expressed only in Heaven and unknown to men, had been made evident, and had been, so to say, precipitated in the Old Testament prophecies. What has been predicted of Jesus He and the Father had decided to perform. His work on earth was not completed until those prophecies had all been realized. Only then, with fullest justification could He exclaim: "It is finished," for then had He actually accomplished the commission of His Father.

By these means was man also enabled to recognize the complete harmony which existed between the will of the Father and the deeds of the Son, to perceive the humble submission of Jesus to the will of the Most High and thereby appreciate in full measure His Humility of mind.

Our Lord's chief work on earth, that of which the prophets had spoken in the first place, was *the salvation of mankind* by the sacrifice of the Cross. Even

this, however, was not a special humiliation to which Jesus had submitted that He might give an example of Humility. It was an inevitable consequence of the abasement enacted in the incarnation, a consequence which was bound to follow as soon as our Lord revealed to humanity His divine nature. His holiness called forth the hatred of the unholy populace and iniquitous rulers, and His testimony to Himself not only gave the power, but also rendered it necessary to accuse Him of presumption and blasphemy. The God-man's act of Humility received the punishment of presumption with the most ignominious death. It would have been possible to avert this consequence temporarily by a display of divine power, as it had in fact been averted until the hour was come. But such would have been contrary to the Father's will as expressed in the prophetic promises, and the divine work of Love would have been frustrated. That such prevention did not take place can very well be called an act of Humility on the part of Jesus and which fully coincided with the great self-abasement of the incarnation.

The fact that the execution of the Redeemer occurred under such particularly painful and disgraceful circumstances was a dispensation of the Father, and like Christ's lowly birth served to bring before the vision of men the magnitude of the sacrifice while rendering their own earthly sufferings easier to bear.

The fact that Christ's sacrificial death occurred at a certain fixed date was neutralized by the institution of the Holy Eucharist which re-presented it to the men

of all time. This also, our Lord's offering of Himself as food for the faithful, was a deed of Humility, which must be ranked with the fundamental deed of the incarnation and stands in close connexion with it.

The last task of Jesus was to found a Church. Here He shows only Power and sublimity. With a firm hand He drew its foundations, with unfailing assurance He set the first stones, and with a few brief words of command He appointed the builders. In creating such an edifice that was to overshadow and outlast all existing kingdoms, and contain the whole human race, there was no place for expressions of Humility; they would only have endangered its determined beginnings.

That Jesus was humble, He had proved convincingly enough, but now He, the obedient One, possessed all power in Heaven and on earth. He made full use of this power to give to mankind the salvation He had bought with His blood, and so to preserve them as far as possible. Henceforth not He, but humanity had to bow down and to follow the example of Humility which He had set by His own attitude towards the Father; they had to bow before Him who was equal to the Father in Power and Majesty. This bowing down consists in *submissiveness to the Church*, the only institution for salvation that He has created.

The Humility of the Redeemer's mind was expressed solely in the one great deed of humiliation; His submission to the will of His Father when it was designed that mankind was to be liberated from the

tyranny of sin. For the rest He acted only in accordance with this purpose. Manifestations of highest self-consciousness alternated with lowliest services, according to and exactly as the moment demanded. Christ hardly ever made demonstrations of Humility, merely for the sake of example, but His Father's Providence supplied many occasions where our Lord could again and again prove His readiness to submit to external abasement. This Humility of mind, together with the teaching of Jesus which imposed this virtue as a duty on the faithful, co-operated with the incarnation to supply a firm foundation for Humility in the world, and to ensure its victory over the old pernicious pride within the religious community but newly founded.

CHAPTER IX.

THE HUMILITY OF THE SHEPHERDS.

JESUS CHRIST is a *priestly figure.* He is the High Priest, the chief shepherd of Christianity whom God the Father has sent on earth in that quality. Though the example He has set in all the virtues is of the highest value for all other believers, yet He is in the first place an example for priests, for the shepherds to whom the flock of the redeemed has been entrusted. There is a fundamental difference between His position and that of believers who are not priests. His position is not only higher but different in its very nature. He never was a layman, at least not in the New Covenant. Before He began His official work, He belonged to the members of the Old Covenant, and fulfilled all the precepts demanded by it. He was even willing to submit to the baptism of the last prophet St. John. By all this he gave a good example to the members of the New Covenant, but, apart from fulfilment of the eternally valid moral law, He gave it only by the obedience shown, not in the actions themselves. Afterwards, as soon as He began His official active life, and founded the New Covenant, He stood at once at the head, subject only to the

Father, with whom He was peculiarly connected in a way not comparable to that of men with God.

From this moment He was the priest, the shepherd who established an authoritative example for His successors in office: the Apostles, bishops and priests who were the shepherds of His flock. In everything, especially in Humility, had they to follow His example and His precepts and not their own views.

The Humility of Jesus was manifested in His willing subjection to the Father to whom He was not only co-ordinate but really equal in nature. If the Humility of the human shepherds was to be of equal value to that of our Lord it was not enough that they should subject themselves to the heavenly Father, because He stood above *them* in infinite Majesty, whilst sharing all His might and glory with the *Son*. To be humbly subject to God the Father was a matter of course for the believing Israelite, and therefore no advance on the Old Covenant. *It was essential that the shepherds should bow before their fellowman, recognized as holy and as the Messiah*, whose divinity was revealed to them solely by faith, arising from a pious life. In this alone they resembled their Master, who submitted Himself as man to the heavenly Father though He was entitled to share His divine power and honour.

God the Son did not always give expression to His Humility. Eternally He reigns with the Father in unity and equality. Only when a great purpose, the salvation of mankind demanded it, did the Almighty

descend from the Throne to serve the Father in deepest abasement. Correspondingly with this the human shepherds do not for ever show their Humility to their fellow-man Jesus. Only as long as the sublime purpose, the salvation of mankind demands it, i.e. during their own earthly life, do they submit themselves to the man Jesus Christ, their Master living on earth. This their earthly position does not include as it did with Jesus, a position in an existence before Time, but it does include for them a position in the eternal life after the earthly death. In that eternal life they are no longer subject to the Jesus *living on earth*, just as Jesus apart from His incarnation is not subject to the Father. But being creatures there remains a subjection: they now serve the Most Holy Trinity, of which the *glorified* Christ is a member.

But how is it that *all* shepherds of Christianity are subjected to Jesus in His earthly life? Were not only the Apostles enabled to offer Him their homage and to receive His personal commands? It seems as if the other priests can only serve the glorified Christ? But that is just the point on which everything depends, and out of which the whole position of the priesthood, especially the nature of their manifestations of Humility, must follow. The intercourse of the Apostles with Jesus incarnate may in a certain way be compared to the co-operation of God the Father with the Son in Eternity. As the Father gives to the Son in full unity of will with Him the great *commission* for the salvation of mankind, so also

Jesus gives to the chosen disciples during His earthly life the corresponding commission to continue the work of salvation, while at the same time He is sure of their consent. "As the Father hath sent Me, I also send you," says the Lord Himself. The *execution* of the Apostles' mandate does not, however, take place during their companionship with the Lord on earth, just as Christ's *fulfilment* of the Father's commands was not enacted during the communion in heaven between Father and Son.

Here at this point a gulf divides the Giver of the Mandate and Him or them who receive it. In the one case *the Son descends to earth*, in order to humble Himself before the Father, and begin His work. In this separation from the Father, but in constant faithful remembrance of the accepted mission, He carries it through. In the other case *the risen Jesus is lifted up into heaven* while His Apostles remain in the lowliness of earthly life, and take up their work. In this separation from the Master but in steady faithful consciousness of their mandate they fulfil their office to the end of their lives. In both cases the commencement of the work is heralded by the appearance of the Holy Ghost, in the one at the baptism in Jordan, in the other at Pentecost. We see that the Apostles after the Ascension stand in the same relation to the glorified Christ as Jesus after the Incarnation to the heavenly Father. Their mandate came from the Redeemer living in the flesh and working beside them as their equal, to whom they had bowed in Humility;

and the mandate of Jesus came from the Father, united to Him in Heaven, to whom He humbly submitted. *In both cases the execution of the work takes place after the separation.*

And now the unbreakable chain is extended. The Apostles stand as ambassadors of the Lord at the head of the faithful. As the Lord has delivered His will to them, so they convey their commission to their successors, the leaders of the Christian communities, who submit themselves to them in Humility. As Jesus has sent us, so we send you, they could say to them. According to the Apostles' precepts and hence according to the precepts of Jesus, the chosen ones continued the work and again entrusted it to suitable successors. Without an interruption, without a gap, link is joined to link so that the whole extent of Christendom is encompassed by it. We must therefore say: *that all human shepherds, from the Apostles to the youngest priests living to-day in Humility serve Jesus Christ who walked in the flesh, and as His messengers fulfil the orders of the man Jesus.*

It was His will that this continuous transmission should take place, therefore all who were indirectly commissioned were equally to be considered as the servants of Jesus living on earth. In the Apostles the whole priesthood of the New Covenant was called to the fulfilment of Jesus' commands, as God's Son was called to the fulfilment of the Father's commands.

This does not imply that priests forego direct intercourse with the *glorified* Christ and with God the

Father. That would deny all Divine service. But this entire intercourse is dependent upon the subjection to Jesus in the form of a servant and rests on faith in His divinity and obedience to His teaching and precepts. He who does not believe in the divinity of the historical Jesus and does not surrender to Him, cannot connect himself by prayer and Sacrament with the Divine Persons: the Most High Triune God reigning in Heaven.

Jesus has accomplished one great manifestation of Humility on which all similar manifestations are more or less dependent: His submission to the Father. In the same way every priest accomplishes one great manifestation of Humility out of which his entire further behaviour proceeds: submission to the man Jesus Christ, working on earth, i.e. humbly taking His place in the chain of successors, and adapting himself to the hierarchical order. In this way he becomes the co-recipient of the commissions which Jesus gave to the Apostles and thereby the willing servant of a human master whose divinity has been made known to him by faith.

By this act every priest has proved his Humility in full measure, just as Jesus did by the incarnation. Everything else is, as with Jesus, only execution of the accepted commission and manifestation of obedience and not a special display of Humility, though doubtless many humiliations in a human sense are allied to it. At the same time the priest will give evidence of strict truthfulness by faithfully redeeming

his pledged word, and of being superior to common human conceptions. There is no need for a priest to perform actions for the *sole* purpose of showing Humility after his great act of Humility. All his self-abasements have, as with Jesus, a specific purpose in connexion with the execution of his commission. At the same time it is surely understood that a truly humble mind must be manifested throughout his whole behaviour.

In the same way as a series of specific tasks arose out of the Father's commission to our Lord, so the priest has to fulfil various commands which can easily be considered separately, and correspond with those of the Saviour.

That a priest must lead an exemplary life in order to give an example to the faithful, need not be discussed here at length. Of course no one can reach the perfection of Jesus, but the piously contemplated example of the Lord, combined with the power of the Sacraments is well able to cause true Christian morality to blossom freely among the shepherds of the Church, and even to produce saintliness of life. Humility of mind is presupposed of course, because without it even the most edifying behaviour would be worthless.

The next commission which the priest received in conjunction with our Lord, is the communication of the supernatural knowledge and of the new law to the faithful. Here we see Humility in twofold operation, first as a standard by which the teaching may be pre-

served in perfect agreement with that of the Redeemer, and secondly, as a subject of doctrine for the congregation.

The first case does not apply to Jesus, for He did not require such a standard. He could not err in His Divine knowledge. His Humility to the Father was expressed only in His acceptance of the teaching office, a task which He performed correctly as a matter of course; the priest, however, would immediately err from the right path. He must submit to the will of Jesus, and the will of Jesus is expressed in the teaching of the Church, because she has received from Him the assurance of infallibility, i.e. of the faculty to preserve His teaching free from error, and develop it according to requirements. This fact renders Catholic sermons remarkably superior to Protestant preaching. The priest teaches what he has received from the Church —healthy, substantial food which really nourishes. The personality of the Protestant minister is far more prominent and he is inclined to advance too much of his own views. We have seen that the priest is bound to adhere to the doctrine of the Church unconditionally and unfailingly. If he does not, he violates his word by not fulfilling his solemnly accepted task, and the demonstration of Humility connected with that acceptance, becomes valueless. Connected with the doctrine of the Church and the Redeemer is the appointment of the ecclesiastical teaching power. Therefore those priests to whom this is entrusted, fulfil their appointed task and testify their Humility by developing that doctrine in

a suitable manner and without altering its substance. It would be culpable negligence if, at the time when its performance was required, they abstained from their duty. It would not be contrary to Humility for priests or laymen, though they have no official part in the teaching authority, to occupy themselves with disputed questions of Church doctrine, perform desirable interpretations, undertake commentaries, or attempt a defence of the Church when an opportunity arises. At the same time there exists no obligation to do such things for any one who has not been specially entrusted with that work, or is adequately prepared for it.

A priest, however, who, though insufficiently informed in theological matters, out of love for the Church undertook to defend her against some or other attack, would merit strong condemnation. Such an act would be contrary to Humility, and damage the whole Church; it is, however, hardly likely that any individual priest will feel called upon to do this, because the question would not be of his own, but of the Church's doctrine, and the Church has her own qualified and appointed advocates.

In the Protestant Church this is quite different. In consequence of the reigning liberty of thought and teaching, practically every preacher holds an individual opinion on some question or other. Therefore each one feels personally responsible for the contents of his own sermons, and this is especially so with those who have the gift of eloquence; such men are easily

tempted on occasion to defend in writing what they have preached, even though they lack both the required knowledge and acuteness of logic, as well as clear cool judgment. Brilliant sermons are altogether a danger to Humility, particularly if not kept in check by firmly established Church doctrine. The preacher easily over-estimates the value of his utterances and his own importance, having every time apparently the assent of a large assembly, and, because the public often goes too far in personal appreciation, he comes to feel as if he were an independent spiritual leader possessing a retinue of followers. Catholic preachers may thus be led to apostasy, but Protestants not so easily, because they are hardly limited in their utterances. The presumption is, however, the same in both cases.

A third task of Jesus was *to manifest Himself to men as the Son of the Most High, as true God*, whereby His great, fundamental deed of Humility became recognizable. He appeared most deeply humble by exalting Himself most highly above everything earthly. It is the corresponding task of Catholic priests to prove themselves, so to say, colleagues of the incarnate Redeemer and High Priest, sacramentally connected with Him. By asserting their prerogative to so high a dignity and claiming such unprecedented distinction, i.e. the close relationship with God incarnate, priests render the best testimony for their Humility of mind which, of course, flows from Christ. Now their unpretentious humble demeanour before their fellowmen, their earthly super-

iors and their congregation receives its full value and adequate acknowledgment. The higher a priest stands, the more important the relations are by which Jesus has united Himself to him, the more clearly shines his Humility. Especially do Bishops (the real successors of the Apostles, and by whom the lesser shepherds receive their call), and, at the end of the chain, the Pope as heir to the Prince of the Apostles and as our Lord's Vicar on earth, throw a particularly bright light on their truly Christian Humility by showing forth their distinctive position.

This showing forth is performed not only by words, but by many externals adapted to the nature and mental capacity of carnal men. With Jesus such means were out of place. If He had appeared in priestly or royal vestments, His enemies would have been roused to immediate and therefore premature interference, and His friends would have conceived false Messianic hopes. Moreover His disciples had not sufficient means to present Him with such equipment and there was in consequence no opportunity for Him to accept or reject their gifts of love. But what they could afford to spend, was accepted by Him without reluctance. He went about in good, dignified apparel, and did not disapprove when a precious oil was used for anointing Him. On principle He was not adverse to external ornament, provided that it served a higher purpose and was prompted by love and veneration.

For successors of Jesus, the shepherds of a universal

Church, the matter lies differently. They may express their high ecclesiastical position, their relationship to the King of Kings, by means of adequate adornment. This was introduced quite rightly and established by Church-law because it helps the people to understand the significance of the priesthood and presents an opportunity for the faithful to show love and veneration to their spiritual leaders by suitably equipping them. It would be pride and not Humility for the priests to refuse gifts made in recognition of their office, or to repel the love which is shown to our Lord through them. In reality they find acceptance a sacrifice. Moreover the specific priestly ornaments are not meant to adorn the person of the priest, but the sacred act which the priest performs.

Sometimes, however, the servants of Christ appear in extraordinary simplicity or even poverty, and if so, this serves a special purpose, just as does the whole astonishing wealth of forms in the Catholic Church. On the one hand it is an exercise of Humility which religious societies, the Orders, take upon themselves with the approval of the Church, and on the other hand it is an actual lesson in Humility for the people. Jesus neither required the first nor employed the latter, but the need for these societies has developed in the Church.

In coming to Jesus' task *of fulfilling the Old Testament prophecies*, what is its equivalent for the shepherds? We came to look on these prophecies as, so to say, a precipitate of the commission given by God

the Father to the Eternal Son. Now we must ask: Have our Lord's directions whilst He worked on earth also left a similar precipitate? I think we may well consider *the New Testament writings* to be such because here also has the Holy Ghost been at work so that the precepts and teachings of the Redeemer were authoritatively recorded. Jesus surely did not require the prophecies in order to fulfil the Father's commission correctly, but they made it easier for men to have faith in His divine mission. Just so the Church does not require the sacred Scriptures in order to guard and observe the pure doctrine, but by the agreement of her traditional doctrine with the contents of the Scriptures men became impressed with the conviction of the Church's divinity.

Corresponding to *the Lord's work of Redemption*, we find in the Church the administration of the Sacraments, pre-eminently the Holy Eucharist, by which that work is continually re-presented. Instead of founding *the Church*, the clergy have to preserve it. The manifestation of Humility which lies in both these actions coincides with the great act of Humility, the submission of priests to the will of Jesus when He was on earth.

The priest who strays from the doctrine of the Church, is guilty of disobedience and breaks his word to the Divine Son walking on earth. He commits a grave sin, but his sacramental connexion with Jesus is not broken thereby. But if he secedes entirely from the Church and fights in the ranks of her enemies,

then his action is *treason to the man Jesus*, and must be considered equivalent in nature, though not in heinousness, to the great sin of Judas Iscariot. Protestants always receive such apostate priests with special joy, though they generally do not abide in the newly chosen faith, but continue towards utter unbelief. Great weight is attached to their representations of the Catholic Church and her conditions, because "surely they must know all about it". How very false this conclusion is, ought to be clear to every reasonable person.

Imagine Judas Iscariot at the time of his betrayal, in answer to questions put to him, describing the company of Jesus and the Apostles. What would he have done? He would have spoken of trickery and magic, of our Lord's superstition about the devil, of His strained relations with His family, of His blasphemous presumption, of His intercourse with persons of ill-repute, he would have talked of envy and jealous bickerings among the Apostles, of law-breaking and acts of rebellion against the authorities, of all kinds of human frailties which existed among them; all this he would have told by referring to actual facts, but with the greatest possible distortion and with the addition of impure motives. On the strength of such a report by a man "who must know all about it," many respectable people would have turned away from such a suspicious company. And if to-day a similar report came to light, let us say, one addressed to the Jewish Council, the Sanhedrin, how would the enemies of

Christianity exult over the new first-class source and such authoritative information. Judas would be the hero of the day, the only sensible person who had put a stop to the falsehoods and deceptions, but who unfortunately had committed suicide in a superstitious moment; possibly this uncomfortable ending might be conveniently set aside by textual criticism.

The evidence of apostate priests has a similar value to that of Judas. *They must paint black in order to justify their own action*, and hatred against the Church marks all their declarations. It is folly to put faith in their assertions without first carefully checking them. This is, however, hardly worth while, because no one denies the existence of many imperfections in the Church, and even the greatest defects prove nothing against her holiness. Ingenuous Protestants who trust "Judas reports" that have sprung from a very bad conscience, believe the Catholic Church to be full of superstition, sin and strife. But he who belongs to her finds profoundest wisdom and holiness, love and peace in abundance, whilst serious failings can be found only after prolonged search. I admit that one must regard her with love and *humbly allow oneself to be instructed in all that remains incomprehensible.* It would be a blessing if Protestants would make it a rule never to form a final opinion about anything Catholic without inquiry from a well-instructed Catholic, preferably a priest.

The historian who judges accordingly to the traditional standards knows only a proud, ambitious and

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domineering priesthood, and makes hardly any difference between the servers of heathen temples and the Catholic clergy. He has no understanding whatever for the fundamental contrast between the representatives of heathen cults, who were quite self-dependent, and the shepherds of the Church, who are in strictest dependence on tradition, and on whom Humility is constantly imposed. This Humility, however, demands such a *dignity and distinction in the Office*, that adversaries call it haughtiness; it demands unbending determination and sometimes sharp resistance against secular arrogance, and in the defence of truth and right, whereby opponents are hurt. But all this does not—apart from exceptions—constitute a presumptuous character. The distinctive feature of the priesthood, is Humility.

We must recognize that this Humility of the shepherds can be compared in every respect to the Humility of Jesus, only that in their case many exercises of the virtue are added which Jesus could easily forego. Besides Him, we possess another example of Humility for the flock, for all the faithful, and to this we will now turn our eyes. It is the sublime figure of the Mother of God, the most blessed Virgin Mary.

CHAPTER X.

MARY.

Vergine madre, figlia del tuo figlio,
Umile ed alta piú che creatura
Termine fisso d'eterno consiglio![1]

WITH these glorious words St. Bernard addresses the Mother of God in the First Canto of Dante's "Divina Commedia," when he asks for her intercession. They characterize very strikingly the position of the Blessed Virgin. Her virginal dignity as mother, her devotion to the Divine Son, in whom she thoroughly believes, her sublimity founded on the deepest Humility, and her significant unique position in the Eternal Father's plan of salvation, all this finds expression in Dante's short address. All these great attributes can be traced to their central principle, Humility, and from this they have all arisen. There is no need to say in the superscription: "The Humility of Mary"; her name alone is sufficient, for her whole being is Humility. He who names Mary, names Humility and names her who through her Son vanquished the serpent: personified pride, that tempted the first human couple to an act of disobedience.

[1] Dante's "Paradiso," XXXIII, v. 1.

Jesus Christ showed His Humility by submitting to the heavenly Father in order to bring about the salvation of Men. Apostles and priests prove their Humility by bowing as men in fullest obedience to the Man Jesus. But how does Mary show her humble-mindedness, she who was distinguished in quite a special manner, more than patriarchs, prophets and apostles? From her the Divine Messiah took flesh that He might consummate His great work. He bestowed upon her the dignity of Mother of God.

One might think that the fundamental manifestation of her Humility consisted in the fact that in spite of such extraordinary blessedness she did not give way to presumption, but remained a modest homely woman who fulfilled her duties simply and honestly and did not strive for public acknowledgment of her sublime position. That was hardly particularly meritorious, but only avoidance of the sin of conceit. How could she have been allowed to derive self-assumed rights from the circumstance that God used her as an instrument? Moreover it would have been difficult for her to gain anything by presumption. The great mass of the people, including almost all believers, had as yet no clear conception of the true nature of Jesus. They would have considered any arrogant behaviour of the mother as most unseemly and would have reprimanded her for it with severity if not with scoffing. A place of honour among the Apostles Jesus alone could procure for her, and such He evidently was not inclined to do.

No, the really conclusive manifestation of Mary's Humility was something altogether different. It is expressed in Dante's words: "figlia del tuo figlio" (daughter of thy Son) and was consummated in the solemn moment of the Annunication.

Here Mary testifies first of all to her faith in the message of the angel who announces something so unprecedented. Then in pious submission to God's will she gives her consent to the deed of grace of the Most High with the words "Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it unto me according to Thy word," a consent by which she rendered a direct service to mankind, for without it men could not have been saved. God had foreseen her willingness on which His dispensation was founded, but her freedom of will remained unimpaired, when the decisive moment came. Lastly, and this is what concerns us here—she humiliated herself with these same words more deeply than man has ever humbled himself before. *She recognized the child that was to be born of her, to be the Son of God and thereby her Master*, a Master who surpassed her not only in earthly power, as a posthumous king surpasses his widowed mother, but with regard to his whole nature, who stood above her in infinite majesty, the Creator above the creature.

This deed of Humility cannot be compared with the submission of the Son to the Father because in that case supernatural conditions prevailed, but we must say that it exceeds that of the Apostles.

They bowed to the Redeemer as He appeared

among them as their equal, but Mary submitted to Him, who by natural laws was subject to her, and owed her obedience and reverence. Therefore Mary's act of Humility was dependent on special circumstances. Not only had God chosen Mary as the humblest woman, but in view of her sublime destination by an act of Omnipotence He had granted her a remarkable excellency. She was conceived without original sin. This did not exclude the possibility of yielding to temptation, but she received the ability to keep herself pure; the same faculty which our first parents had once possessed. We may regard this as an anticipative effect of redemptive grace, which was first of all necessary, because the Holy God could not take His abode in a temple sullied by sin. The fact that Mary kept herself pure, establishes her pre-eminence over the mother of the human race.

From the one great act of Humility, the willing subjection to her own Son, sprang the whole Humility of the Mother of God during her life, and especially during the lifetime of Jesus. She was fully conscious that the Grace vouchsafed to her was an unspeakable happiness, for which, as she exultantly said to Elisabeth—the nations would call her blessed, yet she never forgot her own lowliness with regard to the expected child. Throughout the infancy and youth of our Lord, she was in spite of her position as mother, the servant who cared for His bodily welfare and managed the affairs of the family with His permission.

His obedience was absolutely voluntary and ceased as soon as higher purposes intervened.

Protestants almost universally believe that the Catholic Church, in order to enliven and beautify her religious services, has fashioned an artificial image of the Blessed Virgin, ascribing to her a multitude of splendid qualities by which she appears worthy of highest veneration. They say: in reality she was only a virtuous, but by no means distinguished woman, having little understanding for her Son's work. This opinion, which I myself of course formerly shared, is founded on the lowly position which the Gospels ascribe to her. The image of the Mother of God, as it lives in the Church, is descended from the oldest traditions and can hold its own against scientific investigation, provided only that he who examines, believes in the miracles of God and has an understanding for sanctity. Catholic writings dealing with this subject[1] are so accurate in their judgment, so logical and acute in their arguments, and so regular and certain in their results, that friends of truthful research cannot fail to be highly satisfied with them. So much cannot be said of the Protestant writings, though they do not lack extensive scholarship. By the disposition to exclude or at least to reduce as far as possible the spiritual element, not only is their point of view biassed, but important circumstances are overlooked

[1] I call special attention to the excellent book by Bishop Aloys Schafer: "Die Gottes Mutter in der heilgen Schrift," Münster (Westphalia) 1900, to which I chiefly refer.

and evident improbabilities are of necessity inserted. Just as the image of the Lord, so the image of His Mother is adjusted to preconceived opinions, and thereby unavoidably distorted. Mary was holy and pure, filled with deepest Humility.

This supposition we are bound to accept, which not only in the light of the plan of salvation is a necessity, but by it her personality and behaviour alone can be explained without inharmonious contradictions. Thus the supposition of her Humility is fully and scientifically confirmed. The Mother of God acted exactly in accordance with her duties and in obedience towards the will of the Most High. *She did not participate in tasks to which she was not called and made no communications for which no demand existed.* She was far removed from every endeavour to assert herself or to show her importance or even her Humility. She *was* humble; that sufficed. Without much ado she fulfilled her duties as mother to her Divine Son whose supernatural descent she knew, and it is evident that no definite explanations of the miraculous birth of our Lord were given by her until through faith in her Son a community had been formed who desired such information, and from whom she need fear no malevolent misrepresentation of her story. In these and other communications she gave only what was essential and served to promote faith, not what would have shed a brighter light on her own image. And so it came about that out of the whole lengthy period of the Redeemer's youth and preparation only such facts en-

tered into the Gospel reports as were of importance for understanding His character, or cast light upon His vocation. Jesus Himself acted quite in agreement with His Mother in not honouring her in any special public manner, and not giving her a pre-eminent position among His followers. Doubtless she was the first to attain full faith in Him, because she possessed the needful Humility, and was the first to recognize her Son's divinity. But as long as she lived on earth her faith gave her no further prerogative than that of other believers. Every one who gave himself fully to the Master and who fulfilled the Father's will, came into the same close relationship to Him as His Mother. Only after proving herself worthy in all the joys and sufferings of life by devotion to her Son, and after preserving till death her unique purity and Humility for the sake of which such great blessedness had been bestowed upon her, only then, in Heaven, could that sublime position above all creatures be granted to her, a position in which she is acknowledged by Christendom. It was just the humble retirement in submission to her Son during His teaching activity and to the Apostles whom the Lord had appointed to be guardians and proclaimers of the new faith, which was the preliminary condition for the singular pre-eminence in which she had been placed at the Throne of God. And in this connexion it is possible and even probable that by avoiding all unnecessary marks of respect and even by occasional apparent harshness, Jesus assisted her human weakness. It was thereby

made easier for her to be content with her inferior position.

That Jesus seized an opportunity to show the power of the mother's intercession was a special dispensation for the benefit of mankind. It was at the marriage at Cana, at the suggestion of Mary, that the Lord performed His first miracle, and moreover put aside His plan of working by doing such a deed before His time was come. But even here the mother had first to submit to an apparent refusal and to a certain humiliation. She did so willingly, because she felt subject to the Son.

We further see that, quite in accordance with her mental disposition, the Lord's Mother appears in public only when an urgent opportunity arises, once with Jesus's "brethren" at the moment of a critical turning-point in the teaching activity of her Son, and then again under the Cross, where the "Woman" of the primeval promise in Genesis, and the sorrowful Mother of the Redeemer could not possibly be absent. Everywhere we meet calm obedience to the Son combined with full confidence in the unerring correctness of His actions. It appears very significant that we have not the slightest report of attempts on the part of the Mother to turn her Son's fate, or to urge Him to greater caution, and that apparently she retained her full composure even under the shadow of the Cross. Unconditional submission to all that Jesus did and to all that happened to Him, is part of her innermost disposition, of her Humility.

It is a serious injustice and a scientific mistake which every investigator should carefully avoid, to punish, so to say, the Mother of God for her Humility by disallowing her virtuous qualities and her merits since they are veiled by her unselfish and tender discretion, and by interpreting unfavourably the behaviour of our Lord towards her, though it was quite justifiable and accepted by her with willing devotedness. This is done chiefly by those who are accustomed to put their own profit and their own honour before everything else, and who have come to the conviction that this is an inviolable rule with all men. Such people cannot enter into the thoughts and feelings of a Saint from whose mental world all base motives are excluded in a degree and manner quite unique.

Investigators with such principles might acknowledge the ecclesiastical view about Mary had the Evangelists told us much of her self-sacrificing love for her Son, of His practical education, of the loving intimacy between the two, and of the high veneration which Jesus had always shown to His Mother, which would mean that Mary herself, whilst informing the Gospel-authors, would have talked a great deal about these things. Those scholars would think very highly of the Mother of God if she had rendered capable assistance in the Redeemer's work, if she had helped Him to recognition, supported Him in His work of healing, and other beneficent deeds, if she had shared His dangers and adventures, and if the

Apostles had, so to say, looked upon her as a Co-Regent. But if all this were a fact, if Mary had behaved thus and taken up such a position, then the ecclesiastical view of the Blessed Virgin's personality would be quite wrong, and Mary would be wanting in that pure and noble sublimity for which she has been praised by believers of all races, and of all times; she would not deserve to be called the most glorious image of Humility, and sublimest pattern of womanhood. She would have paid for the higher esteem of the children of the world by decreased appreciation among the true disciples of Christ.

No, whoever wishes to understand the Blessed Virgin, and her life, must approach her in ways other than those of scholastic methods of research and the conventional knowledge of men. He must purify and sanctify himself; he must attain a firm faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and accept the teachings of His Church, because it is a task which reaches far into the spiritual realm, and can only be solved by spiritual help. Thus prepared and after thorough investigation of the revealed writings, it will be possible gradually to delineate the features of her sublime figure.

We have seen these features are not so easy to find that they at once meet the eye of every doubt-loving scientist, but they do exist and may be faultlessly put together to form a harmonious picture. The whole Bible from Genesis to the Revelation of St. John is permeated with them. The more keenly one looks the more radiantly does the figure of the Mother of

God show forth from its pages. In the Old Testament she manifests herself in the prophecies and typical miracles, in the New Testament in various communications and testimonies right up to that stupendous vision of the apostolic seer on Patmos: the woman clothed with the sun, the moon at her feet and adorned with a crown of stars.

The inner harmony of all those passages is indeed astonishing. Nothing can provide a clearer proof of the fact that the whole sacred Book whose parts have been written by the most diverse authors in intervals of many hundreds of years, does yet proceed from one originator—the Holy Spirit. How else could it be possible that an event like the virgin birth is predicted again and again under similar pictures until it happened exactly in accordance with those predictions.

Now I ask why Protestants are so little inclined to the veneration of Mary and feel an actual repulsion against it, though she is depicted in such wonderful beauty and purity in that most affecting evangelical report, the story of Christ's birth. The cause may lie in the craze for uniformity, in the opinion that before God none may be higher than his neighbour, none may be exalted so far that men pray to him. And because the intercession of Mary is sought more than that of any other saint by Catholics, she therefore is considered to be the chief cause of the alleged mistaken ritual customs. I believe, however, that there is another reason for the Protestant opposition. The whole greatness, the entire position of preference of the

Holy Virgin can only be apprehended *by those who are filled with unconditional full faith in the divinity of Jesus.* Then only, but then absolutely, highest veneration will be paid to her. On the one hand, it is unthinkable that God could have chosen for Himself a temple unworthy of His holiness, and on the other hand, only such faith as that can see the full glory of her Humility.

Now in Protestantism this faith is very much shaken, since no Divine Church is recognized as the solid foundation of the conviction of Jesus's divinity. Many Protestants have even lost it entirely and therefore arrive consciously or unconsciously at the conception that Mary was the Mother of an eminent but mortal man. That conception obliterates at once the superhuman shimmer in which true believers see her, and takes away the chief reason for all special and unique veneration, for the very greatest man may have had a most ordinary mother. On the other hand veneration of Mary exerts a very valuable influence on belief in the Divinity of Christ. Its exercise increases this faith while its mission undermines it. It has therefore been said rightly: Were Mary exiled from the Church she would soon draw her Divine Son after her. In the Protestant communities He is actually on the way.

And now there is a second point which calls for consideration. Protestantism works chiefly with scholarly knowledge, using it as a weapon with which to fight for its right of existence. Now most persons in

the history of salvation, including Jesus Himself, can be apprehended to a greater or smaller extent, though never perfectly by pure secular learning. The Holy Virgin, however, is a flower so delicate and tender that she would be destroyed by such, and her true nature would remain unknown. To draw her figure correctly, a true, deep Catholic faith is needed, a quality which Protestant scholars cannot possess. Therefore they can only produce an incorrect distorted drawing, and such a figure they cannot possibly venerate. They sometimes seem to be irritated at the entire failure of their worldly means and methods.

Another point to be noted is that the innermost nature of the Mother of God irreconcilably contrasts with the innermost nature of Protestantism. In the one case we perceive purest Humility and devotion; in the other, self-exaltation and rebellion. How can she be sincerely understood? Every Protestant, though he may be personally inclined to Humility, has a strong religious self-esteem implanted in him; pride in his personal power of judgment is, so to say, forced upon him, because the highest questions are continually submitted for his own decision. Thus do his senses and his comprehension become dulled to the unspeakable sublimity of the Holy Virgin, for this sublimity is Humility.

"Umile ed alta piú che creatura!"

CHAPTER XI.

THE HUMILITY OF THE FAITHFUL.

JESUS CHRIST is the example for all men, priests and laymen alike, in so far as general human matters are concerned. He is the example of priests alone as His proper priestly task, the redemption of the world, is concerned. He could not exemplify the special task of the laity, their relations to the priesthood, for Jesus never was a layman in the New Testament sense. For this relationship He has established another example, a human being without priestly position but of unequalled perfection: the Virgin Mary. And when we bear in mind that the Humility of the laity finds its chief expression in their relation to Jesus as high priest and to the priesthood generally, we recognize that Mary is for all the faithful the teacher of Humility.

Every human being who wishes for redemption, must be cleansed from his sins in Holy Baptism. Thereby he becomes in particular free from hereditary sin. The corresponding act in Mary's life was the omnipotent action of God by which she was conceived without the blemish of hereditary guilt, so that she was able to keep herself free from sin. She did not

require the Sacrament of Baptism. In this respect therefore: in the acceptance of Baptism, she cannot be an example, but all the more in her longing for salvation. She was a pious Israelite who waited for the salvation of Israel and was ready to receive it. In the same way men who are lost in sin should long for salvation and be brought to the acceptance of Baptism, if this grace has not been vouchsafed to them without their own doing in infancy, as the deliverance from hereditary sin was vouchsafed without her doing to the Mother of God. For those who have received Baptism in infancy, the longing for salvation is manifested in the endeavour to preserve the baptismal grace, and, if lost through sin, to recover it through the Sacrament of Penance. We see therefore that the similarity between Mary and all Christians is expressed in the longing for the Redeemer of mankind, while the difference appears in the means of acquiring the grace of salvation.

In a mysterious way, not to be understood by human reason, He who was the salvation of the world was revealed to the Holy Virgin. She received Him in her womb, and brought Him into the world as His mother. Her great Humility consisted in this, that in the child, which she bore under her heart, to which she gave birth in the lowliest surroundings, she acknowledged and revered the expected salvation, the King of Kings, and that she was willingly subject to Him. *This example is to be followed by the faithful and especially in the Holy Communion.* Here likewise they stand

before an unfathomable mystery. In the one case the God of heaven assumed from the Virgin the body with which He appeared on earth, and in the other He comes into the closest communion with the faithful with this same, though glorified body, in the form of bread. They must accept by faith the incomprehensible act, as Mary has done with regard to the miracle of conception. Just as she, they are to bow and submit to that which is apparently lowly, that which is here seen in the semblance of a homely food, and they are not to ask how such a thing might be possible. In this manner they show as perfectly as can be imagined the Humility of their mind.

Carefully examined, the connexion is as follows: Sinful man, urged by desire for salvation, has turned to the Church and recognized her divinity. He has received Holy Baptism or has recovered baptismal grace by the Sacrament of Penance. Now the Church demands from him an act of Humility corresponding to that one which Mary performed. He is asked to acknowledge in the Holy Eucharist the presence of the Body in which the Lord suffered on the Cross, indissolubly united to the soul of the Son of God. In the insignificant Host he is asked to greet and adore the King of Kings. Jesus knew well that this is a very exacting demand, a severe test for the soul of man, so much disposed to pride, and always ready to disregard such "absurdity"; but Jesus has made this demand, *because it is just pride which has to be overcome*, by every single person, as Mary first over-

came it. The unprecedented miracle takes place actually and truly, and man has to submit himself and his judgment, though both are ever disposed to pride, to the word of Christ as it is proclaimed by the Church. Only by doing this, can he be preserved in close communion with the supernatural world and in the enjoyment of all the gifts of Grace which the Church offers.

The faithful must ever practise and manifest Humility. The entire ritual of the Church is arranged for this purpose, and it depends on the degree of saintliness in each individual whether the various actions are to be considered as practice or manifestation. What one person performs reluctantly, only to obey the Church, and in order to produce Humility, another does with love and devotion, so that it becomes a manifestation of Humility. Thus is it meant to be. The manifold devotional actions have been introduced, apart from their meaning, to strengthen the Humility of the faithful by their submitting to a higher not always convenient authority, a submission which should be willing.

With what supreme disdain do both the educated and uneducated Protestants look down on the externals of the Catholic Church; the genuflexions, the sign of the Cross, the frequent prayers, the use of holy water and so on. He has no need of such things, he serves his God as it suits him, and not according to the devices of other people. Those forms which still exist in His Church are observed by him only so far as he finds convenient.

But what shall we say if those "other people" were

priests of the Most High, called by His only begotten Son; if they, filled with the Holy Ghost and rich in deep insight into human character, created and elaborated those customs to assist the weak sinful heart of man and destroy in him that spirit of presumption out of which proceed those cold repellent words of Protestants? What shall we say if those practices actually do create and promote Humility, calling forth in individual hearts feelings of increased tenderness and piety and a unique blessedness? Are we not compelled to say that these forms and customs are really more to be commended than the uncontrolled indifferent behaviour of those of other faiths?

No, it is *not* true that one can pray just as well sitting as kneeling, unless there is a special necessity for sitting; it is not true that one can have the same holy affections while behaving at Church as at a meeting hall, as when the Catholic signs of reverence are used. For the right employment of such means of worship true Humility is required, and on the other hand Humility is increased by them and loves to express itself in their use. The true believer misses something when he must forego such manifestations. He feels more satisfied when accompanying his prayers with them. That the majority of Protestants have no desire to use such signs and forms shows their lack of Humility.

I have spoken in another book about the value and significance of set prayers. Surely their use is a practice for the increase of Humility and a proof of its existence, especially when they impress the mature

mind as ingenious and childlike or when they seem to contain exaggerations. *We are to become as little children ; this command of Christ remains, though free-thinking Protestants mock and laugh.*

Mary knew perfectly well that she was but a member of the laity, and she never attempted to interfere with the priestly activity of her divine Son. She served Him in Humility as being the guide of her soul, though from an earthly standpoint, she was superior to Him. In the same way laymen have to submit willingly to the priests in all spiritual things, because, for the laity, priests stand in the place of Christ and were instituted as shepherds of the flock by Jesus when on earth. The same spiritual relationship as between Mary and our Lord exists between believers and the priest. Unless specially asked, the believers must not interfere with the work of the shepherds, the doctrine and the government of the Church, and pastoral care of souls. To attempt to do otherwise would be wrong even though the layman might claim a higher rank from a worldly point of view.

Protestants are fond of criticising the obedience of Catholics to their priests, especially their humble behaviour towards them. They say: it is right to bow before God in heaven but not before men. That argument may be held with regard to their preachers, for they have not received a call from God, but applied to the Catholic Church it is quite wrong.

In his position as shepherd, called and sacramentally consecrated by Jesus, the Catholic priest is obliged to

demand signs of Humility which are offered to the Redeemer through his person. And this is well, for only in this way can real Humility be awakened and visibly expressed. It is certainly very right and commendable to bow before God in Heaven, and this is indeed what we have mainly to do. But this is a thing that has to be learnt. Is it a great mistake to believe that every one is truly humble who calls God His Lord Most High and bends the knee before Him whose image appears only in his mind. Is it not a matter of course for us to acknowledge as high above us a Being whose very essence infinitely transcends us? Otherwise we do know no God at all. But such acknowledgment is no abasement, no humiliation. Every pagan who believes in a great Spirit can do as much.

No, the God of Christians demands true, sincere Humility, and therefore, as practice and as proof, *perceptible humiliations*. Just as the Apostles had to bow before the man Jesus, whose equals they were, as Mary had to bow before her own Son who, humanly speaking, was subject to her, *just so the laity must humiliate themselves before the priests, and that in a serious manner.* There exists a great difference between expressions of Humility uttered in the privacy of one's heart, and real outward manifestation of it to a fellowman. And it makes a stupendous difference whether, as in the Protestant confession one confesses in a general way that he is a sinner, thus only stating an acknowleged truth, or whether he tells his confessor in the confessional his individual sins without reservation, in order to receive

censures, admonitions, and even penances at his hands.

Only such real palpable humiliations can create, increase and prove true Humility of mind. *God has no need for mere words.* To be without confession is a serious drawback for Protestantism, while all attempts to introduce it are in vain since there exists no lawful priests to whom Jesus has given the right of absolution, and the secrecy of confession cannot be absolutely secured, at least not supernaturally. Who would care to reveal his inmost secrets to a clergyman without such supernatural security, and that clergyman generally a married man? Such a man has no idea of the strict secrecy required; *he may believe that under certain circumstances it is allowed to give hints* or to let unusually important considerations prevail over secrecy. In fact he would be right in thinking so, because he is not and can not be bound in the same way as a Catholic priest. One warning should, however, be given. *People who are not obliged to confess their own sins very often form a habit of confessing the sins of others.* Clergymen should guard against allowing this. The best way to put a stop to such practice will be to make it a condition of his listening to such complaints that the plaintiff first discloses the state of his own conscience. The manifestation of pharisaical presumption must be met by the demand for Humility.

We have seen that Jesus demands from the believers humble submission to the priests in all spiritual things in order to further and attest Humility. But in so

doing He does not demand abasement and submission in the pagan sense. *The humble man is not asked to bow before proud but only before humble fellowmen.* The priests have the same obligation as the laity. They too have to manifest Humility to their superiors, often to their equals and even to inferiors. The bishops and the Holy Father himself confess their sins. In this respect there is no prerogative. Therefore the whole arrangement appears as a benefaction with liberating and elevating purposes, and not as a mortification. Love removes from it every sting.

Manifestations of Humility in secular life are a necessary consequence of the practice and teaching received in Church. The main point in them is to feel that one is the servant of one's fellowmen, and has to devote one's life to the purpose to which one is called; just as Mary considered herself to be the servant of the Child whom she was to bear for the salvation of the world, and of the whole human race to whose salvation her work, her life, and her sufferings were consecrated. These afflictions of Mary give us a special lesson in Humility. Just as she trusted firmly in her Son, even when unswerving adherence to His task brought Him to shame and death, just as she never doubted His Divinity even when His work appeared destroyed, and He Himself seemed annihilated, so we must retain our faith in the Church and remain humbly obedient to her, even when she is despised and abandoned by the whole world or when she appears hopelessly lost. Just as the Lord, so will His Church rise ever again to higher glory.

CHAPTER XII.

HUMILITY IN SCIENCE.

To the proud man the supernatural world is closed. He may advance excellent philosophical systems which contain much that is correct; he may found so-called religions in which the moral powers of man develop in a gratifying manner; he may press the Christian doctrines into all kinds of moulds and persuade many people to accept such enticing products. But he will never be able to obtain or give the certainty of truth to his creations. It may well be that his adherents swear by him, that under certain conditions they even sacrifice their lives for his teaching, but they do this on the strength of his authority and overwhelmed by his influence. All this has nothing to do with the supernatural world. His self-seeking and self-will never attains unto it. Even what he draws from the Catholic Church changes its nature in his hands, because he subjects it to his own judgment and bases it on his own reason, giving to those adopted doctrines any sense he pleases. Those scholars who possess no Humility and will not bow to any teaching authority are quite aware that they cannot get on without truth in respect to what we have called supernatural ques-

tions. They see that their secular Science, whether Religion, Jurisprudence, Natural Science, Archæology or History, everywhere collides with these questions. They are everywhere exposed to error or precluded from finality in their results as long as they decline to accept real truth. In consequence they are compelled to pursue unceasingly their lofty tasks and in this they are of course quite justified.

Their methods vary considerably. Some endeavour to degrade that which is supernatural by explaining everything in accordance with nature and the laws of daily experience. Of course this method can never succeed. The supernatural only becomes thrown as far as possible in the background but can in no wise quite be excluded. It is, for instance, no less a wonder for the original cell to receive the capacity to develop upwards as far as man than for man to issue immediately from a higher source. Investigators who pursue the above methods become entangled in thousands of contradictions.

Others desire to rise by their own strength to the supernatural. They strive to fathom by most careful intellectual development and logic the ultimate cause of all things and its relation to the world and the human race. It is undeniable that in this way much can be attained, and all the more because the idea of God has been implanted in man from the beginning. But on the one hand no guarantee for the results of such researches can be furnished, and on the other hand such scholars are inclined to avoid in

their statements everything of a Christian or even a religious character. And it is quite natural for them to do so. They wish to be known as independent scientific men of research, and fear to be thought dependent by coming too closely into touch with the doctrines of the Church. It may also be that they feel absolute repugnance to the Church, which they consider is antagonistic to liberty, and they hail with special satisfaction results which appear to depreciate her.

Others again, and these are mostly Protestant theologians, take their stand as far as possible on the Christian side. Their calling demands this because they are officially Christian men of Science; in most cases their inclination also prompts them, because they have chosen their calling with Christian intentions. But as they do not submit to the real truth, and wish to maintain the standpoint of free research, they demand that truth submits to them. They attempt to construe the true Christian religion by their own supreme reason, by purely intellectual use of existing sources; they increase the number of these sources in a manner deserving gratefulness and strive with lively zeal to establish their value and verbal exactitude. A theologian of this kind expects human hearts, his own as well as others, to feel satisfied by submitting to his opinions, be it that they arrive by independent research at similar results or be it that they accept his. But as each of these scholars arrives at an entirely different result, the hearts which need truth are torn hither and thither by the contending opinions.

These follow chiefly two directions. In the one the supernatural is excluded on principle, no miracle of God is acknowledged and the whole material of the historical sources accordingly explained. In the other an exceptional interference of God's represented as possible and considered as having actually taken place in those instances where even rationalistic examination cannot well deny it. In either case the judgment of the individual scientist is alone authoritative.

Concerning the first school of thought, it has already been described in what arbitrary manner the sources are often violated so that the represented image loses all supernatural features. This is the only way to carry out the principle of excluding the miraculous, because the chief purpose of the Holy Scriptures is to proclaim the supernatural. Only by disregarding the principles of historical science is it possible to exclude miracles.

It is a deplorable fact that not only the authors of the holy writings, but also the men of which they tell, have departed this life long ago, and that thus the authoritative witness of the meaning and contexts of the Scriptures, of the facts and of the intentions and motives of the persons, have gone. They cannot defend themselves in an earthly sense against those often incredible imputations, and therefore the false assertions remain and find faith with thousands. In connexion with this it is very instructive to watch an instance where the object of the research is still among the living and can speak for himself, and especially is this so when oneself is that object.

When I had joined the Catholic Church, I wrote a book[1] in which was set forth an unreserved representation of my motives, *not concealing a single one of them*, and to this I added my entire conception of the Catholic Church. The question was, in the main, a supernatural one, because the dealings of God with the human soul, as well as the whole image of the Church, are to be reckoned as belonging to the supernatural realm. I had received a grace from God, for every earnest conversion to the faith must be traced back to a gift of grace from the Almighty.

This book has called forth a great many opinions, mostly from Catholics, but now and then also from Protestants, and a few special books have been published against it. I cannot be angry with my adversaries, because my faith makes me far too happy. They write according to their understanding, though with very little reflection. In many respects I once have thought as they do and have also tried the false standpoints which are now recommended to me as the only correct ones, but I am glad that with God's help I have left that nebulous region behind. I cannot controvert their unscientific utterances. My new statements would also be overlooked or misconstrued, as those in my book have been. To refute calumniations of the Catholic Church is a task which I leave to more competent and better informed advocates; it is done extensively, and it were well if Protestants

[1] "Back to Holy Church. Experiences and knowledge gained by a Convert" (Longmans, 1910).

would not close their eyes so much against these efforts.

The manner in which the various writers of pamphlets and books explain my conversion is very remarkable. It supplies an excellent opportunity of studying the Protestant method of research and testing its reliability from an exceptionally favourable point of view.

As a matter of course, according to them divine Grace could have had nothing to do with my conversion. Freethinkers will not allow the existence of such a force, and the Protestant orthodox believers would not hear of it in this instance since the success was that of the Catholic Church. Likewise neither of these parties could admit at any cost that my recognition of the truth of Catholicism was a consequence of impartial research and study. *Thus were several solutions of the question eliminated on principle by infallible decree, that a "reasonable" solution might be found*, and now they set out to look with calm reason for some other motive of the strange occurrence. Very curious things have come to light in the quest.

One person asserted that my conversion was an instance of Atavism; my ancestors in France having been Catholics, I was said to have had an irrepressible inclination towards the Catholic Church. A few passages in my book were explained accordingly. I will not dwell on this arbitrary idea which cannot possibly lay any claim to proof. Most frequently and energetically was my conversion imputed to Catholic influence, though this is contradicted most directly by

statements in my book. Considering the naïve ideas of Protestants about the Jesuits, it was natural that they were named as most guilty in this respect. Now I regret to say that I have not had the happiness to make the acquaintance of a single member of the Society of Jesus, and I have not known any of their writings previous to my decision to enter the Church. I have mentioned in my book all my very slight relations to Catholic circles. For the rest I have only drawn from Protestant sources. All imputations to the contrary are simply fictitious.

I wish to say particularly that in writing my book "Back to Holy Church" I have excluded every personal influence. No one outside my nearest family, especially no Catholic, knew anything of its preparation until it was actually in the Press. Only the first chapter I had shown to a relative and that because she was mentioned in it. Not until the proofs were ready did I show them to a priest whom I knew, that he might draw my attention to any dogmatic errors which might exist. He found very little that was wrong, and the chief alteration was the elimination of a rather sharp passage against Luther. The present book is being dealt with in the same way. No one who might possibly influence its contents will know that I write it before it goes to print. An expert examination before publishing is, however, absolutely necessary, because I am no theologian, though firmly resolved to write in full harmony with the doctrine of the Church.

Some people think that I have been attracted and enticed by the exterior magnificence of the Catholic divine service. That is the common conception of conversions. Curiously enough I had on the contrary a liking for the simple and homely, e.g. for family worship. I valued a form which was pleasing, out of reverence to God which seems to demand it, but pomp and glitter were not what I cared for. Only the deep meaning of, and the truth contained in the Catholic ritual, by which the holy is not only represented and depicted, but bodily shown and offered, has awakened in me enjoyment of the more brilliant solemnities. The light is the most important thing, which reflects a thousandfold from all the beautiful externals and confers on them heavenly splendours. Without the light from God all would be empty theatrical glitter. It is evident that also in this respect quite a false motive has been imputed to me.

My former position as an officer has been used to explain my step from purely rational motives. The strict discipline between superiors and inferiors, the exact obedience which prevails in the Catholic Church, is said to have impressed and attracted me. I can say with a clear conscience that such thoughts have never occurred to me. On the contrary, what I liked in Catholicism was the loving intercourse between those in high and low position, between Christians and Christians. In military life such delicate relationship can hardly be said to predominate.

Finally, I have been accused of mental indolence

and of wishing to avoid personal exertion with regard to religion and therefore submitting to the teaching authority of the Church. This is an absolutely monstrous imputation in the case of a man of Science. I can assure its authors that my conversion has stimulated and compelled me to very acute reflection. And I never suffer from want of work.

I think I have made it clear that religious research on rationalistic lines, all results of which I cannot enumerate, has in my case suffered a complete and demonstrable defeat. The object of this research has been in a position to express his own opinion of the motives which have been said to underlie his action, and he has repudiated every one of them as incorrect.

Now I will not at all assert that liberal theologians act with similar levity as my Protestant judges, or that they do not justify their statements with far greater thoroughness, but it is undeniable that the lines on which they proceed are very closely connected, and that the critics have learnt from the theologians. The method consists in excluding at the outset certain solutions which do not harmonize with the individual theory of the world, and then trying to prove other solutions to be correct by fair means or otherwise. *Would scholars dare to apply such a method to biblical persons if they were still alive and able to speak for themselves?*

Men who are too proud to bow to any teaching authority are, as I have said, unable to give correct answers to spiritual questions or to apprehend the true

aspect of spiritual events. Just as the believer requires Humility to partake of the gifts of Grace dispensed by Holy Church, so the man of Science must be humble to solve the highest questions and to give the persons and events of the history of salvation their due. And here we must ask which is the act of Humility required as a foundation for this state of mind?

It is submission to the mysterious miracle of the Holy Eucharist, exactly the same duty that is laid on every member of the Church. No preference at all can be shown to the man of Science in matters of duty, but he can derive from the act of Humility demanded of him considerably more benefit for himself and his fellowmen than can those of more limited knowledge.

In deep Humility of faith he receives in the insignificant form of bread the Lord of Heaven and earth. Peace and joy and purest blessedness are the effect by which the actual miracle gives unmistakable witness of itself. This experience creates the willingness to accept supernatural facts as such and awakens the understanding to supernatural events. The eyes are opened to the spiritual world, to the nature and activity of the Church and to the history of her birth which so abounds with miracles. Without this experience the scientist would, like the "liberal" Protestant scholars, oppose everything that cannot be grasped by cool reason; or he would, like orthodox Protestants, accept of these transcendent things only what can be sufficiently proved by purely human methods. But after the experience I have described,

he bows to the Lord whom he has received in the Sacrament, to Truth incarnate whose word can not deceive. He bows before the teaching authority of Holy Church established by Christ. Prompted by faith, he accepts her doctrines, and starting from them, using all attainable sources and exerting the powers of his intellect to the utmost, he strives to fathom the relationship and connexions concerning persons and events.

It would be a grave mistake to think that the fundamental laws of Science would be violated by such a method, and that sentiment would have undue influence on rational investigation. This is out of the question. The experienced miracle confers on the recipient the mental assurance that the facts of faith, proclaimed by the Church, facts that can never be grasped by the human intellect—are true and correct. It points to the spot where his desire for solution of supernatural questions becomes satisfied, and inspires him with confidence in that place. Scientists who, without that experience, would fall into error whenever they stepped across the boundaries of earthly human knowledge are now enabled to move securely in the spiritual realm.

Such a security of movement would not exist were the doctrine of the Church contrary to truth. The scientist would immediately lose his confidence, because what he accepted by faith would not be capable of being brought into harmony with the results of his worldly researches. He would be met by difficulties

and contradictions. But the fact that such difficulties and contradictions do not appear, but rather disappear in proportion to the thoroughness with which his investigations are conducted, and that more and more light is thrown on all questions with which he deals, provides an unmistakable proof for the Church doctrine, a proof the strength of which even unbelievers themselves may feel.

I maintain that nothing is withdrawn from worldly examination unless its very nature demands such withdrawal, and even these subjects are able to bear witness to themselves in a more perfect and satisfactory manner than most worldly facts can. This is done on the one hand by the admirable harmony which exists amongst all truly Catholic dogmas. The whole edifice of doctrine is an unique mysterious temple, created and grown out of a single thought and containing no part that does not of necessity result from this thought. He who has taken correct hold of the fundamental thought, in one part, will be able, with sufficient intellectual powers, to recreate the whole in accordance with the original. The Church's development lay confined already in the primeval Church, and it could proceed only in one way. Whatever was added was only in execution of the primary plan. Therefore every scientist who has recognized the nature of the Church will, by proceeding on correct rational methods, arrive at results which accord with the established ecclesiastical doctrine. These results may rarely be attained in their perfection, because individuals are not in-

fallible and they must therefore adhere by faith to the established dogmas. The knowledge, however, of a scientist that with more careful research his way will lead ever nearer to the Church doctrine, will continually strengthen his conviction and increase his disposition to submission, that is his Humility.

This method has produced magnificent results for Catholic Science in the history of salvation, from the great doctors of the Church, to the theologians of the present day. More and more have the wonderful ways of God been unveiled, more and more securely the innermost connexions fathomed, and more and more reliably obscure biblical passages interpreted. During this work it becomes clear into what dangerous by-ways both the educated and uneducated alike may stray if they lack thorough theological knowledge, or do not constantly refer to the doctrines of the Church. Often sentences which are to all appearances quite clear contain difficulties which, if misunderstood, lead to absolutely false conclusions. It is right to use the Bible for edification, but not to try to solve serious religious questions from its text without most careful study.

It was quite natural that all self-exalted founders of sects supported the doctrine that the Bible is independent of the old teaching authority, for in it they possessed a religious statute book, which they could very well adapt to their own ideas and plans. Were not they themselves the authoritative interpreters?

It is just as natural that these leaders often showed a great preference for the Old Testament. There so

much is told of divine revelations and inspirations, of an immediate intercourse between the Most High and pious men. That agreed excellently with the relation in which they asserted themselves to stand with God. With the Prophets of the old Covenant, they could represent themselves to their adherents as men favoured from on high, and whose spiritual relations entitled them to religious authority. Of course they paid no attention to the different conditions which prevailed or to the fact that while by the Old Testament revelations preparation was made for the appearance of Christ, now Christ had appeared and had established a teaching authority long since.

How sad is the position which most Protestants picture to be the lot of Catholic men of Science, and especially of theologians. They imagine their work to be like walking in a maze. As soon as they wish to step briskly forward, they are checked by an obstacle in the shape of an established dogma which compels them to turn back. Soon another obstacle meets them which requires them again to turn aside. Thus it goes on until the theologian does not know which way to turn. How different is the reality! The worker moves through a wide and richly cultivated domain towards a fixed goal; the truth. The eternal stars are his guides. Carefully and in all directions does he examine the landscape through which he wanders. From time to time he meets a resting-place marked out by the Church, when she first explored that domain. Seeing them he rejoices, because they

show him that he is on the right path. Should he miss one of the expected points, he can find it again without difficulty, and ascertain what had caused him to go wrong. His miscalculation must at once become evident. Thus he goes his way under the direction of his own spirit, and yet in constant agreement with Holy Church, towards the sublime goal. He is filled with heavenly felicity and deep spiritual satisfaction, because the truth of his results is continually being assured to him. *That is the reward of his humility*, by which he has sacrificed the lawless self-exaltation of his reason and submitted in spiritual things to higher authority. Without this virtue divine truth can never be attained; and without truth the worldly science of spiritual things is in danger of losing itself in paltry details, or of straying on to dangerous bye-paths.

CHAPTER XIII.

HUMILITY IN CONTEST.

HOLY CHURCH has a difficult position on earth. She must contend and wrestle without intermission for her existence, her possession, and her extension now as much as centuries ago. Destined to confer light and life on the world, she is considered foreign to the organism, and one which should be removed. This shows the Church in her essential equality with her founder, Jesus Christ. Just as He, Who was to bring salvation to the chosen people and for Whom Israel had waited and hoped for many centuries, was misunderstood and rejected of His people, so also the Church meets with opposition and hatred, not only from worldlings, and unbelievers, but also from such as confess themselves worshippers of Jesus. Thousands of Protestant preachers proclaim the glory of the Son of God and adore Him daily. But as soon as He approaches them living in the form of His Church and claims acknowledgment, love and submission, they vie with each other in reviling Him and throwing stones at Him because He has chosen a different form to the one that their human intellect had construed. Their method is actually similar to that chosen by

the Sanhedrin of Jerusalem and the majority of the Jewish people. They paid the highest homage to the promised Messiah, but when He came they nailed Him to the cross because His appearance was not according to their expectations, and His demands did not please them.

In the battles which the Church has to fight, Humility is an important factor, for is not all this wrestling between her and her adversaries in the main a struggle of Humility with pride? The question is only in what manner this cardinal virtue of Christianity becomes an actual force and how it is made manifest. Without this inquiry it might appear doubtful whether Humility of mind can possibly be perceptible in events and circumstances the purpose of which is to overcome adversaries and to gain victories.

The fundamental demonstration of Humility for all believers is their full acknowledgment of the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar, the willing submission to the Eucharistic Christ, of human reason to the divine Mystery. For priests there is added the duty of humbly accepting their allotted place in the ecclesiastical official order, as established by Sacrament, and by which they are made immediate servants of Jesus walking in the flesh. These manifestations of Humility are continued and consummated throughout their entire life on earth and also in their struggle for the Church. Whatever considerations are opposed to these manifestations of Humility must disappear.

If priests wish to prove themselves truly humble

they must of necessity freely proclaim the doctrine of the Church before all the world and spread Christian truth more and more, indifferent to the opinions and accusations of others. They must act with determination and never show any signs of yielding, nor the slightest tendency to compromise with the opinions of those of other creeds, though their success might be enhanced by so doing. *Just this determination is the best proof of their Humility.* If they tried to shape the Church doctrine according to the real or apparent convenience of the moment, though it might be only by a trifling difference of interpretation, they would thereby assume an independent doctrinal authority and the ability to transmit by their own power supernatural knowledge. Thus they would step out of their humble position as servants of Jesus and would be guilty of presumption.

Adversaries, of course, would judge differently. They would call the firm defender of the true faith proud, overbearing and intolerant, and give the praise of Humility only to compromising advocates. They would even blame the former for his imprudence in not studying his Church's advantage, while they would commend the insight of the latter. But no one should be misled by such opinions. Of what value are individual, and often very doubtful gains, to the Church, compared to the loss of faith and prestige! It is just her firmness which attracts the minds of those who seek truth and help and that enforces esteem even from adversaries though they may not own it: and in decisive maintenance of doctrine alone is Humility

manifested. *It is also clearly apparent in the unruffled calmness with which priests bear the reproach of pride and presumption.* The accusation is really the same as that raised against our Saviour when he called Himself the Son of God, thereby throwing light on His great Humility, and it is the same reproach on the strength of which He, the restorer of this virtue, was nailed to the cross. That accusation of presumption which the Lord humbly bore, His servant also has to suffer humbly and without resentment. In this case again all depends on the source of authority. If the priest is an ambassador of Jesus Christ, his behaviour is justified and his Humility unassailable. If, however, his connexion with Jesus is non-existent he is a presumptuous man and merits contempt.

Now we must ask: how are the faithful laity to act in this regard? Their fundamental manifestation of Humility, the acknowledgment of the Holy Eucharist, must likewise be applied in the defence of the Church. Their weapon is principally the profession of their faith, free and without fear, and this profession of adherence to their Holy Church is encompassed in their profession to the Eucharistic Christ. He who professes Him in word and deed, fights for the Church by giving proof of his humble-mindedness, he fights for his Lord as an obedient warrior, for there is no other doctrine that evokes as much opposition from the world, particularly from the mentally proud, as the mystery of the Eucharist.[1]

[1] When in the 17th century the Catholics of England were to be excluded from all official State positions, they were asked—and this is

The laity too must be ready to bear external humiliations in the fight. If the priest is reproached with pride and presumption, the layman is called foolish, deluded, superstitious, out-of-date, slavishly submissive to the priests and helplessly subjected to their influence. His profession, arising from his inmost conviction, is said to be the result of the violation of the mentally weak by the mentally strong. In reality, however, only those among the faithful are mentally or morally weak, who allow themselves to be alarmed by such accusations and commence to hide their faith or give it up altogether. Such people deny the Humility towards Christ and His Church by behaving contrary to her precepts in respect to the doctrines of faith; and they assume the ability to form their own opinion on supernatural matters. That they are influenced by the fear of men, cannot excuse them. They abandon *Humility towards the humble*—which is not degrading, but elevating—and exchange it for *submissiveness towards the proud*, which is real degradation.

We see that Catholic Christians fight by means of open profession of pure Church doctrine, and express their Humility by fully acknowledging that doctrine with all its mysteries. They show their faith in every way and on every occasion when circumstances are favourable, especially when the precepts of the Church suggest it. They will not be deterred by the popular

most significant—to deny by oath the doctrine of the eucharistic transubstantiation.

demand to serve God in their own way in privacy and without annoying others. Opponents would, of course, be very pleased if they did, because such a principle would condemn Christianity to decay. How could true religion have spread over the earth and rise to its present position, if everyone had thought only of his own salvation? No, just as the Apostles, bishops and priests have proclaimed and taught the truth to the present day, wherever they could, so the laity must at all times show and explain their faith openly, they also must fearlessly practise it and thereby try to communicate it to others.

It is a peculiar contest which is thus waged for the furtherance and extension of the Church by every Catholic, in proportion to his position and ability, the adversaries against whom he has to fight are unbelief and error, and not the individuals who err and disbelieve. Towards these he manifests only love and Humility; love in striving to do them good and bring them the same happiness which he himself enjoys in the bosom of his Church; and Humility by considering himself their servant and helper. Without looking for acknowledgment he puts himself at their disposal, well knowing that thus he best fulfils his duty of Humility towards the Church and her Founder. It would be pride for the Catholic world, boasting of its store of truth and its position of preference with God, to retire on itself and leave those of other creeds to their fate, or for Catholics to consider themselves a chosen people like the Israelites of old. There seems

to be a certain inclination to do this; but such would be a serious wrong. *Those of other creeds have a right to receive reliable knowledge of the truth*, even though they themselves do not care to hear of it. Young people under age also have a right to many things for which as yet they have no understanding. This right must not be denied them. The fact that Protestant circles are so absolutely ignorant on Catholic subjects is due in great measure to the easy-going, nervous or perhaps proud silence of Catholics themselves. It must not be forgotten that the Catholic faith belongs to the whole human race. He who accepts it, enters the service of the Most High as a labourer, and has no right to become absorbed in his own happiness.

Humility must be manifest in the whole manner of fighting. Though it is absolutely necessary that qualified theologians study and during their researches appropriately refute the doctrine of non-Catholics, yet scientific disquisitions must not become the chief weapon in the work of propagating the faith. If they do, Catholics place themselves at once on a wrong and unfavourable footing. It was the chief mistake of rising Protestantism that it desired to overthrow by means of archæological research and with the sources which then existed that firmly rooted and well-constructed organization fifteen hundred years old: the Catholic Church, who carried her justification within herself and proved her origin by her very existence. This attitude would have been defensible to

some extent, had Protestantism been able to prove convincingly that the historical doctrines of the Church were wrong, but even to-day this is far from being accomplished. It was a strange request indeed that the Church, from sources then attainable, should furnish a proof of her right to exist, and this after fifteen hundred years. An institution that had stood the test so long, was in no way obliged to comply with such a demand. It was, moreover, a scientific error that the opponents denied her claims on the plea that the demanded proof could no longer be given. But to discredit proofs that have actually been furnished just *because shrewd people manage to find out other interpretations of them*, is a still greater perversion.

He who wishes to make people understand the Catholic Church should not embark on such unfruitful contests or he will appear to approve the methods of warfare which his opponents adopt. He must act as the Apostles, the simple men of Galilee, acted; they did not meet pagan philosophy and polytheism with scientific disquisitions, but proclaimed the teaching of Jesus in which His Divinity is expressed, they testified to His wonderful life, His passion, death and resurrection and led a model life. Catholics likewise should always point to the Church, her beauty, solidity and unity, the unchangeable certainty of her doctrine, and the power of her gifts of grace, and strive to lead a life worthy of her. A Catholic may honourably admit the frequently superior scholarliness and virtue of his opponent, and give praise to the grace of God Who has

revealed the truth to him, the unwise, and Whose strength is with the weak.

To contend about details of doctrine for the sake of justifying the Church is permissible, but quite unnecessary. It is much better to disclose the foundations. Protestant creeds are nowhere in perceptible connexion with the supernatural world and have no guarantee for their supernatural substance, though great efforts are made to find such of a scientific nature. The Catholic Church on the contrary is in uninterrupted, demonstrable relation to Jesus walking in the flesh and has received from Him her knowledge and her teaching authority. That is a fact that no one has as yet disproved in anything like a forcible manner, a fact proved to be true more and more by archæological researches. This fact may be denied and a thousand reasons advanced against it, but such denial means disowning the existence of any true revealed religion and putting all supernatural knowledge on a level with unstable academical learning. And Protestantism does not thereby acquire supernatural guarantees; on the contrary, what it contains of assured truth, i.e. that which originates from Catholicism, becomes also subject to doubt and so Protestantism digs its own grave.

In reading controversial writings directed against the Catholic Church, one meets a series of constantly recurring accusations. Also in letters I have received I always find the same assertions and therefore can deal with them all in few paragraphs.

In the first place, evil and superstitious stories are

told of Catholics, Catholic associations, priests and so on. As they are told with the intention of damaging the Church, and as the narrator is, as a rule, quite ignorant of our faith, institutions, and supernatural truths generally, I cannot, as a scientist, put much faith in these stories without careful examination. And even if true, they would only prove that there are bad people in the Church and that the life of faith may produce reprehensible excrescences, a fact that no one denies. The question remains: whether the occurrences criticized have been approved or justified by the Church, and whether the teachings alleged to be advocated by Catholics are really taught by the Church. The adversaries, however, know perfectly well that the Church does not approve of these incidents or teachings. Such things are brought to light solely in order to annoy and hurt the Church. Therefore these attacks, even apart from untruths and exaggerations, have no value at all.

In the second place, reference is made to immorality, said to have reigned at the Papal Court at some periods, and even among the Popes themselves. They seem to think that I am so backward in my own science as to be ignorant of these things. In answer I will give here a passage from one of my lectures on the times of the German Emperors delivered years ago, when my conversion to the Catholic Church was still far from my thoughts. Closely following my notes, I find I said on 1 February, 1906, about the period when Otto the Great obtained the Imperial crown:—

"We can regard this as the most remarkable period in the Papal history, as full of immorality as the time of the Renascence, but much coarser and not glorified by the advance of art. The Popes, taken from a morally degenerated aristocracy, were themselves morally depraved. The worst form of female rule reigned in the papal palace. Dissolute women predominated and established or dethroned the heads of Christendom. In spite of all that, this is in a certain respect the greatest period which the institution of the Papacy has experienced. This institution showed its vitality and health never more clearly than by the fact that it did not perish in this pool of corruption, but moreover worked with beneficent influence. Every bearer of the tiara was drawn into the magic circle and had to work in the spirit of the Institution and thus do much good in spite of every fault. Even the profligates were thus drawn into the service of the Church. He whom we may call the worst, placed the Imperial crown on the head of King Otto."

In considering these historical circumstances, for the absolute correctness of which I cannot vouch, because I relied on other people's researches only, one is vividly reminded of the words of Jesus: "The gates of hell shall not prevail against her" (the Church). Hell seemed to have obtained authority and sat on the throne of Peter, and yet the Church remained what it was, the institution for salvation, the bearer of infallible doctrine. Soon the flood of religious and moral forces of Christianity returned to the papacy and restored its essential purity.

With arguments such as I have considered so far, nothing is gained against the Church. No one doubts that sinfulness does not halt even before the papal throne. But is there a single dynasty where true morality and greatness of mind have been represented so generally, and have produced such magnificent representations as the long line of Popes? It is quite evident that in all such attacks on the Church there lies side by side with scientific shortcomings, pride and pharisaical self-righteousness.

Another group of objections refers to the mistakes of the Popes *ex cathedra*, whereby their infallibility is said to be disproved. The instances given, however, are as trifling and of the same doubtful nature as those in the search for the connecting links, in the history of evolution. If it were possible that the Popes could err in matters of faith, a great number of false doctrines would be demonstrable. The fact that with the most unfavourable intention great trouble is required to find a few apparent mistakes, proves that real ones do not occur.

Finally people try to bring counter-evidence against Catholic doctrine from the Bible. In doing so they either acknowledge the Bible as a work of the Holy Ghost—if they do, they rely thereby on the Infallibility of the Catholic Church which has through divine inspiration established the Bible as such,—or the Bible is only regarded as a secular source; then the results have only a scientific, and not a religious value. In the one case, therefore, people contradict themselves, submitting to the Church while rebelling against her

at the same time; in the other case they are guilty of presumption by assuming that human reason can authoritatively establish the supernatural.

In the main the Catholic Church meets little else than malevolent abuse and haughty fault-finding from Protestants, and this is all the more objectionable since deep knowledge of Catholic doctrine and institutions rarely exists. Why do not their scholars apply to Catholic priests themselves before they judge? The objections themselves are so forced and untenable, that they make no impression at all on Catholics who are well instructed and confirmed in their faith. Protestants possess no solid structure of doctrine, and it would occupy their time far more usefully did they at least give a clear, intelligible and logical survey of their own conception of Christianity.

The reproach has been cast at me that I never understood the essence of Protestantism. That is bad indeed; but who can understand it, if I who am now advanced in years have failed, though I have really and sincerely tried to do so. Is not this the sharpest possible condemnation of Protestantism? Even now I should be most happy for such an understanding to be given me. I would gladly examine such explanations because I desire to understand religious questions to the farthest possible degree. So far I see only confusion on the Protestant side. One teaches one way, the other another, and the opinions of neither can stand accurate investigation. The only opinion which pleased me was that the One True Religion as a whole

is as yet hidden from men, and only appears in different aspects in the various religious communities. In the future after a long struggle a full unveiling may be expected. I share this conception in the sense that the Catholic faith is contained only in a fragmentary manner among the various Protestant creeds, and that in the future the One True Religion will find universal acceptance among all Christians.

I really cannot see why a good Protestant may not also be a Catholic. Protestantism gives almost full freedom towards free thought. Every one may form his faith according to his own intellect. Why should he not have a Catholic faith and live in Catholic forms if his intellect shows him that this is the right way? It would only mean using the Protestant liberty which thousands of others use to lead them in the opposite direction. This question of principle might well be advanced some day. It would actually be the best way to establish peace. Protestants would recognize Catholicism as a justified school of thought within Protestantism, though it would then hardly deserve its name any longer. Catholics would, as they do now, look on baptized Protestants as Christians strayed from the fold, and who under certain conditions can obtain eternal salvation. Such a position, however, is made impossible by the strong animosity that reigns and must reign between the Catholic and every other Christian community, an animosity equivalent to the ineradicable contrast between Humility and Pride.

CHAPTER XIV.

CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS.

PRIDE and Humility stand opposed in the world, austere, irreconcilable and in eternal contest. Pride has been the heritage of the human race ever since it overcame the first couple in consequence of the freedom of will having been granted to them. From it arises man's faith in his own reason of knowledge, in his own ability to inquire into and speak with authority on supernatural matters; this constitutes *unbelief* which, to maintain itself, requires a repeated act of presumption. After a long period of preparation Humility has been restored to humanity by the Son of God come down to earth. Out of it grows man's doubt in his own powers and in the sureness of his own knowledge of the supernatural world, and this constitutes *faith* in the Most High, in Jesus and in the Church, founded and vitalized by Him.

Between Pride and Humility, between unbelief and faith, there is no bond. All connecting links, all transitory creations are productions of imagination, illusions, falsehoods and frauds. *They are but pride in the vesture of Humility* with which in truth they have nothing in common.

Jesus, the historical Jesus, stands in the centre of the world of Humility. His Humility is a shining light that radiates into the past and future. The mighty lawgivers and prophets of the Old Covenant, Israel's powerful leaders, bowed low when they looked to the coming Messiah whom they were called to proclaim and whose servants and forerunners they considered themselves to be. The last of them, John, has testified to this most clearly. The whole Church with all her apostles, bishops, priests and faithful members, bows low before the Redeemer who has come, and with whom she is united in a firm sacramental bond. Through the mediation of the Church all true Christians are imbued with the Humility of Jesus and transformed in their inner being. But this connexion between Him and us does not consist of mere rays of light without substance, but there are *very solid connecting chains* with many ramifications and innumerable links. Every sacramental act forms or strengthens the connexion by new links. In this way alone is spread true Humility as our Lord possessed. Those who sever themselves from the great chain lose the right relationship to Jesus and fall away into pride.

All other attempts to found communities and connect them with the Son of God are futile, being contrary to His will and therefore due to presumption. Such unwarranted formations can never become mediations of Humility. They may appear to contain and to teach Humility, but in truth they are founded on pride alone and permeated with presumption. In the

chain of connexion created by Christ all is clear and distinct, simple and intelligible.

Every one perceives with ease the whole sequence, every one knows exactly to whom and in what manner he has to submit. Here, in the human creation, defectiveness and contradictions, ambiguity and doubt reign. Nobody quite knows what to do with the liberty offered him.

There can be only one truth in the supernatural sphere—only one genuine true religion. This fact must be evident to everybody because the valid existence of a second truth would at once destroy the first. This one true religion, if it exists at all, can be none other than the Catholic faith, because it alone can be adduced irrefutably from the supernatural world, it alone is founded on Humility and is held together in all its parts by Humility. This faith alone has placed the human element in due and perfect dependence on the divine, whilst elsewhere the divine is made subject to human judgment. This may be denied and the Catholic faith declared to be untrue. No one can be prevented from acting in this manner, least of all men of Science who will not fulfil the preliminary condition necessary for obtaining the right understanding. Whoever expresses this opinion, however, should know that he pronounces a purely human judgment that cannot authentically be proved correct. And it must be further remembered that, if the Catholic faith were untrue, no supernatural religion, no heavenly truth could be said to exist in the world. Such a

decision would be equivalent to the sarcastic question of Pilate "What is truth?"

All Protestant doctrines, however they appear, from that which tends to support every Catholic belief and in which only the last step to union which Rome is wanting, to the entirely negative one, which denies to the Lord Jesus even historical existence, the Lutheran and the Calvinistic, the most orthodox and the creed most impregnated with the spirit of free thought, are all founded on human reason, and, therefore, so far as they concern supernatural subjects, are absolutely without warrant. *These teachings constitute a science of supernatural questions but no religion.* The entire Protestant store of learning, comprehensive though it is with its tremendous display of diligence, acuteness and piety, entirely lacks, if dependent on itself, supernatural value. It may attain great importance if used by the one true religion for its own purposes, if corroborated by it in one or other direction. Without that, it remains pure human handiwork whatever sources may serve for the construction of its statements.

And finally if the truth of the Catholic faith is denied, then nothing with power to raise man above the earthly carnal world or to render comfort and hope to him in his misery is left.

In the Catholic Church, however, divine origin and supernatural value can be abundantly proved to anyone who, by a suitable moral life, has won the willingness to understand and the ability to comprehend, and who by reason of such attitude has obtained the heavenly

grace required. In the Catholic Church no neglect of Humility, no trusting to purely human wisdom will be found. On the contrary, she is the true teacher of Humility, and, as such, is the greatest benefactor of the human race.

In order to do justice to the Church it is, however, necessary to contemplate her as she stands before us to-day, with eyes quite impartial and without the fellowship of prejudiced leaders and commentators. She will then produce a wonderfully favourable impression even on those who cannot as yet penetrate to her depths. *This Church of to-day is, then, the best and most reliable source*, of course besides other sources—*for the whole Church-history of the Past.* This fact is generally unrecognized. All her enemies are in the habit of first subjecting her Past to a microscopic examination, and, without using the present Church as a help, drawing from the usually unfavourable results of their research most far-reaching conclusions about the Church of to-day. This method suits their purposes admirably, for past facts and circumstances can never be ascertained with absolute certainty. There is much scope left for wild statements, which no one can silence. Much that is evil about the Church may be gathered from innumerable writings, whether rightly or wrongly interpreted; such things partisans applaud and praise as valuable scientific acquisitions. Bad intentions need not necessarily come into play. A slight carelessness in the examined sources is sufficient to produce such results. It is, however, in reality most unscientific

entirely to omit, or examine only quite superficially, the main source—the Church of to-day.

If they proceed correctly, impartial investigators will soon come to understand from the exceedingly beneficent activity of the Catholic Church of to-day the impossibility of her having had a past as deplorable as the opponents depict. They will perceive that the same Spirit that is indwelling in her to-day, cannot have been implanted only recently, but must have been at work in her at all times, though now and then in secret, hidden by passing evils, sometimes slight, sometimes serious. Investigators will then examine the sources with a more discerning eye and be less inclined to be deceived by malevolent accounts, such as have unavoidably been written in times of religious strife, and they will sift matters to the bottom. In this manner they will in the end obtain a well-formed picture of the Church.

There is indeed no other institution on earth that has preserved its inmost nature with such constancy as the Catholic Church. If used according to true scientific principles, she therefore constitutes a unique foundation for general historical research. The result of a particularly thorough and quite impartial examination may, however, be that the investigator becomes convinced of the Church's eternal truth, and feels compelled to enter into communion with her, provided that he possesses, or is disposed to acquire, the indispensable virtue: Humility.

It is constantly made a reproach to the Catholic

Church that she somehow manages to degrade nations in respect to their spiritual and economical conditions. In proof of this, the bold statement is often made that Catholic nations stand on a lower level than the Protestant, which latter, as they advanced, turned away from the Church. To throw a clear light on these conditions and to establish the true relations between the activity of the Church and the state of civilization and culture in each nation would be a stupendous work which would have to be kept free from prejudice of every kind. But even granted that the ingenuous Protestant's conception were correct, and Catholic peoples were doomed to decline, would that prove anything against the work of the Church?

It is very natural that capable, mentally active races and tribes are inclined to be proud and therefore to fall away from a community in which their moral behaviour and inquiry into supernatural questions are strictly restrained. It is just as natural that less highly developed peoples willingly bow to a teaching authority, and therefore hold fast to the long-accustomed faith and the long-accustomed institution for salvation. The Church being in the first place concerned with the supernatural, it is hardly her place to exert a direct influence on the furtherance of worldly prosperity. Her teaching of Humility is often understood as a charter for indolence and stagnation. Here people must help themselves and if they do not, it is to their worldly disadvantage, and the Church cannot be blamed for it.

These facts cannot be gainsaid, but that does not imply that the Catholic faith is unsuitable or detrimental to the mental activity of nations, or that its effect is to lower them in worldly respects.

On the one hand it is an exceedingly serious drawback for the Church that nations of alert and mentally superior character have turned away from her. She is thereby prevented from influencing many important movements in the human race by imbuing them with her spirit. She has thereby lost many excellent allies for her world-embracing beneficent work, who now often put the greatest obstacles in her way. How gladly would she work with these forces, with these peoples and tribes whose noble qualities are also alive in her. How nearly related, for instance, are the genuine old Puritan spirit and the inner nature of the Catholic Church. Homely efficiency, strict discipline, faithful devotion and fearless fulfilment of duty, regardless of the changing opinions of men, all these we find there as well as here. And yet, what sharp contrasts there often are between the representatives of those forces of civilisation and culture!

On the other hand the deserters have suffered through the separation an incomparably more serious loss, and one that becomes more and more noticeable. Humility has disappeared, this includes everything. Mediocrity, superficiality and semi-culture are everywhere; earthly endeavours for pleasure and profit prevail, and authority is exercised by merely numerical majorities. In Science, also, the lofty-mindedness and

depth of former times have largely disappeared, and are replaced by academical narrowness. And chiefly do we perceive the absence of divine power and grace. The cylinder of the machine has lost its guide-rail, and clatters and threatens to render the whole work useless.

The alienation from God that has taken place has produced these most serious evils.

Protestantism proves more and more its inability to alleviate numerous needs and perils of the times. It has no intrinsic power. It yields to circumstances, accommodates itself to all movements, it is friendly with each and all, and even sits side by side with Atheism when the Catholic Church is attacked and accepts their praise of its "moderation" and "reasonableness". Catholicism on the contrary can and will help in the difficulties of the day. It offers such an infinity of good things that not only the declining nations, but also the youthful and ascendant ones acclaim it, especially those which are not impeded in quiet examination by fierce hatred and ancient prejudices. Catholicism will also gradually regain in the seceded countries a position commensurate with the present conditions of the world and will set against all the morbid teachings about a future existence and all the vague self-made Christianities, the one genuine, living and joyful Christian faith with its sublime mysteries, on the foundation of which the holy fathers have built up their grand spiritual work and in whose possession millions have found a life of abundant satisfaction, and also a happy death.

A very curious impression is produced by all the sinister warnings against our Church, which are published everywhere and frequently sent to converts by well-meaning friends. One asks, whatever do these people mean? Round about one is so much light and happiness, peace and love, so much dignity and sanctity, and yet such tales of horror are advanced, containing, may be, now and then a grain of truth, if you like even full truth, but are immaterial to the value of the whole. Catholics are, of course, sinful men, and if faith leads sometimes or often to transgression of the boundaries, it is better certainly than the excrescences of unbelief. What of the gloomy glances cast at our Church, as if her teachings were some horrible aberration? He who belongs to her feels continually how she works in truly evangelical sense for the improvement of her members, and that far more effectively than the Protestant communities; how she exhorts constantly to love and peace, especially towards those of other faiths, and this though she strongly condemns their teachings and strictly emphasises her own historical truth. *If all those alleged darknesses really existed in the Church, one surely could not help noticing them as time goes on.* Instead of that she unveils herself more and more radiantly to the careful investigator, as the true and holy work of the Son of God leading up to a happiness of ever-increasing purity. Meanwhile deep shadows are gathering over the Protestant world. Doubtless there is much light there also, but it originates from Catholicism, and becomes more and more

eliminated by the influence of a purely rational Science. And there is an element in all the utterances of Protestantism that is repulsive to a believing Catholic. It is the element of presumption and pride which cannot harmonize with that distinguishing mark of the Catholic Church, to which she owes her power, her unity, her organization, in short her whole being and existence and this fundamental virtue is *Humility*.

THE END.

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